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EDUCATION AND YOUTH EMPLOYMENT IN BELGIUM

Henri Janne

A STUDY PREPARED FOR THE
CARNEGIE COUNCIL ON POLICY STUDIES
IN HIGHER EDUCATION

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Education and Youth Employment in Contemporary Societies

A Series of Special Studies

BELGIUM *Henri Janne*	GREAT BRITAIN *Stuart Maclure*
JAPAN *Hidetoshi Kato*	MEXICO AND SOUTH ASIA *Alberto Hernández Medina, Carlos Muñoz Izquierdo/Manzoor Ahmed*
POLAND *Barbara Liberska*	SWEDEN AND DENMARK *Gösta Rehn, K. Helveg Petersen*

FEDERAL REPUBLIC OF GERMANY
Klaus von Dohnanyi

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Foreword

This is one of seven publications presenting studies commissioned by the Carnegie Council on Policy Studies in Higher Education as a means of providing a global perspective for education and youth employment in contemporary societies. The remaining publications will be concerned with education and youth employment in Japan, by Hidetoshi Kato; Mexico and South Asia, by Alberto Hernández Medina and Carlos Muñoz Izquierdo and Manzoor Ahmed, respectively; Poland, by Barbara Liberska; Great Britain, by Stuart Maclure; Sweden and Denmark, by Gösta Rehn and K. Helveg Petersen, respectively; and the Federal Republic of Germany by Klaus von Dohnanyi. Margaret S. Gordon, associate director of the Carnegie Council on Policy Studies in Higher Education, is the general editor of the series. To the authors of these studies, and to Henri Janne, whose work appears in this volume, we express our deep appreciation.

The German Marshall Fund generously provided support for two international conferences on education and youth employment which were attended by several of the authors of studies for this series and which have contributed significantly to the Council's deliberations on this subject. The International Council for Educational Development, under the direction of James A. Perkins, arranged for the participation of the essayists in this project. We acknowledge these contributions with profound thanks.

We also wish to extend our thanks to Mary Purnell Frederick and Diana Lorentz for their editorial contributions, and Sylvia Zuck for coordinating manuscript preparation.

CLARK KERR
Chairman,
Carnegie Council on Policy Studies
in Higher Education

1

Introduction

The age range 15 to 24, chosen as the focus of attention for these studies, is particularly appropriate for Belgium. Following six years of primary school, compulsory education terminates with an "observation" phase—the first stage of secondary education—for 13- and 14-year-old Belgian youths. At the age of 15, youths in Belgium can either begin to work (in most sectors of the economy) or attend noncompulsory secondary school (consisting of an "orientation" phase for 15- and 16-year-olds and ending with the "determination" phase for 17- and 18-year-olds). As in the United States, secondary school may be followed by college studies of four to six years.

By the age of 25, most Belgians have embarked on their real occupational careers, after diverse patterns of preparation involving vocational education, training preparatory to work, or irregular unskilled and rotation work. At this age, also, most people are married. The end of graduate studies ordinarily takes place at age 22 or 23 (with the exception of medical studies, which are longer, lasting seven to ten years after secondary school). Those completing their graduate studies usually spend one or two years in probationary or temporary employment

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***The author wishes to express his thanks to Pierre Desgain (University of Brussels), who prepared the statistical tables relating to youths in Belgium. The present study owes a great deal of revision—not only as to language but also as to organization of the text—to Margaret S. Gordon. Her suggestions have resulted in improved presentation of certain data as well as in their interpretation.**

and then settle into a stable job. For people with less prolonged study, stable jobs are usually found, at least in the case of men, after a period of military service (generally at ages 19 to 20), although even in those cases some "trials" are necessary. And, of course, marriage is linked with job stability.

Belgium, one of the first countries on the continent to enter into the industrial revolution even before the nineteenth century, was influenced very deeply by the main cultures of Europe throughout its history. It was annexed at various times as a protectorate or "crown territory" to Burgundy, Spain, Austria, France, and the Netherlands. These powers, their elites, and their armies had a strong impact on the development of Belgium. Moreover, Belgium is geographically at the crossroads between Northern European civilization (historically marked by Germanic culture) and Southern Europe (basically "Latin" and associated with the Roman Catholic Church). The boundary between these two civilizations divides Belgium into two parts: 59 percent of the population is Flemish (Dutch speaking) and 41 percent is French speaking.

Paradoxically, at present the Flemish people (the northern sector) are more devoted to the Roman Catholic Church than the Walloons (in the south), who are more influenced by the ideology of the French Revolution and "laic" radicalism and by a strong agnostic socialist movement. The Flemish people are "organizational"–pragmatically minded, political rather than ideological, and possessing a high cultural and imperialistic sense of community. The Walloons are more ready for violent social struggles, more inclined to ideologies, and more disposed to take an angry defensive position about their French culture and language. These differences become very clear in relation to the socialist and trade union movements: the Flemish movements resemble German or Scandinavian social democracy, and the Walloon movements resemble Mediterranean socialism. But as a result of the common base and tradition in Belgium, the Belgian Socialist Party has been until now the only party that has not succumbed to the pressure of the regional communities problems.

Thus, Belgium is a synthesis of Europe and, with its cultural and linguistic divisions, is really a sociological laboratory. It is, of course, customary to consider youth as a workshop for the future. But these mixed and opposed sociological characteristics complicate the problem of identifying the most significant characteristics, signs, and trends.

Demographic Changes

From 1961 to 1974, the rate of increase of the youth population (ages 15 to 24) was 31.2 percent, compared with only 6.5 percent for the total Belgian population (Table 1). This rate of increase however, has recently been diminishing, having reached its peak among those 19 to 20 years old in 1974 (that is, born in 1954 or 1955). From 1961 to 1974, the rate of increase was only 10.8 percent for 15-year-olds, compared with 49.3 percent for 19-year-olds and 60.4 percent for 20-year-olds. This trend will continue (with a falling birth rate) and slow down the increase in the youthful population.

What is especially meaningful is that the growth of the relative position of youth in society was very important in the 1960s. Moreover, the present demographic position of youths continues to be a strong factor affecting the evolution of culture. Figure 1 demonstrates that the increase in the relative size of all youths, ages 15 to 24, from 1960 to 1974, was more pronounced than for subgroups of youth separately. Nevertheless, there will be a decrease in the size of these age groups in the 1980s.

Roughly 60 percent of the youth population of Belgium lives in the Dutch-speaking region, while about 30 percent resides in the French-speaking region, and the remaining 10 percent in Brussels (Table 2). The French-speaking region gained slightly in its share from 1961 to 1970, and the Dutch-speaking region lost slightly. The changes, however, were less pronounced for the younger of the two age groups.

Family Status of Youth

In Belgium, girls marry earlier than boys and usually marry older boys. According to the 1961 census, among those 19 to 24, there were about 163,000 married women and only 82,000 married men (about half). The 1970 census indicated that there were about 224,000 married women and 133,000 married men

Table 1. Changes in youth population by age and sex, 1961 to 1974
(numbers in thousands)

Age	1961			1970			1974			Percentage change, both sexes, 1961-1974
	Male	*Female*	*Total*	*Male*	*Female*	*Total*	*Male*	*Female*	*Total*	
15	73.2	70.2	143.4	75.8	73.4	149.2	81.0	77.9	158.9	10.8%
16	61.7	60.1	121.8	75.1	72.5	147.6	79.9	76.4	156.3	28.3
17	62.0	59.9	121.9	74.1	70.9	145.0	79.2	75.2	154.4	26.7
18	59.4	57.1	116.5	74.4	70.9	145.3	77.7	75.0	152.7	31.1
19	51.9	50.0	101.9	71.6	69.1	140.7	77.6	74.6	152.1	49.3
15 to 19	308.2	297.3	605.5	371.0	356.8	727.8	395.4	379.1	774.4	27.9
20	47.5	46.7	94.2	72.5	69.9	142.4	77.1	74.0	151.1	60.4
21	52.9	52.2	105.1	72.3	64.5	141.8	76.9	72.7	149.6	42.3
22	57.9	58.3	116.2	74.1	71.6	145.7	77.5	72.0	150.5	29.5
23	59.9	59.9	119.8	74.6	71.3	145.9	74.6	70.7	145.2	21.2
24	58.4	57.7	116.1	75.6	71.5	147.1	75.6	71.2	146.8	26.4
20 to 24	276.6	274.8	551.4	369.1	348.8	717.9	381.7	360.6	743.2	34.8
Total aged 15-24	584.8	572.1	1,156.9	740.1	705.6	1,445.7	777.1	739.7	1,517.6	31.2
Total population	4,496.9	4,692.9	9,189.8	4,721.9	4,929.0	9,650.0	4,792.1	4,996.1	9,788.2	6.5
Youthful age groups as a percentage of the total population										
15-19	6.8	6.3	6.6	7.9	7.2	7.6	8.2	7.6	7.9	
20-24	6.2	5.9	6.0	7.8	7.1	7.4	8.0	7.2	7.6	
15-24	13.0	12.2	12.6	15.7	14.3	15.0	16.2	14.8	15.5	

Sources: 1961 data are from the Belgian decennial census of December 31, 1961; 1970 data are from the decennial census of December 12, 1970; and 1974 data are official estimates for December 31, 1974.

Figure 1. Youths as a percentage of the total population, 1955–1974

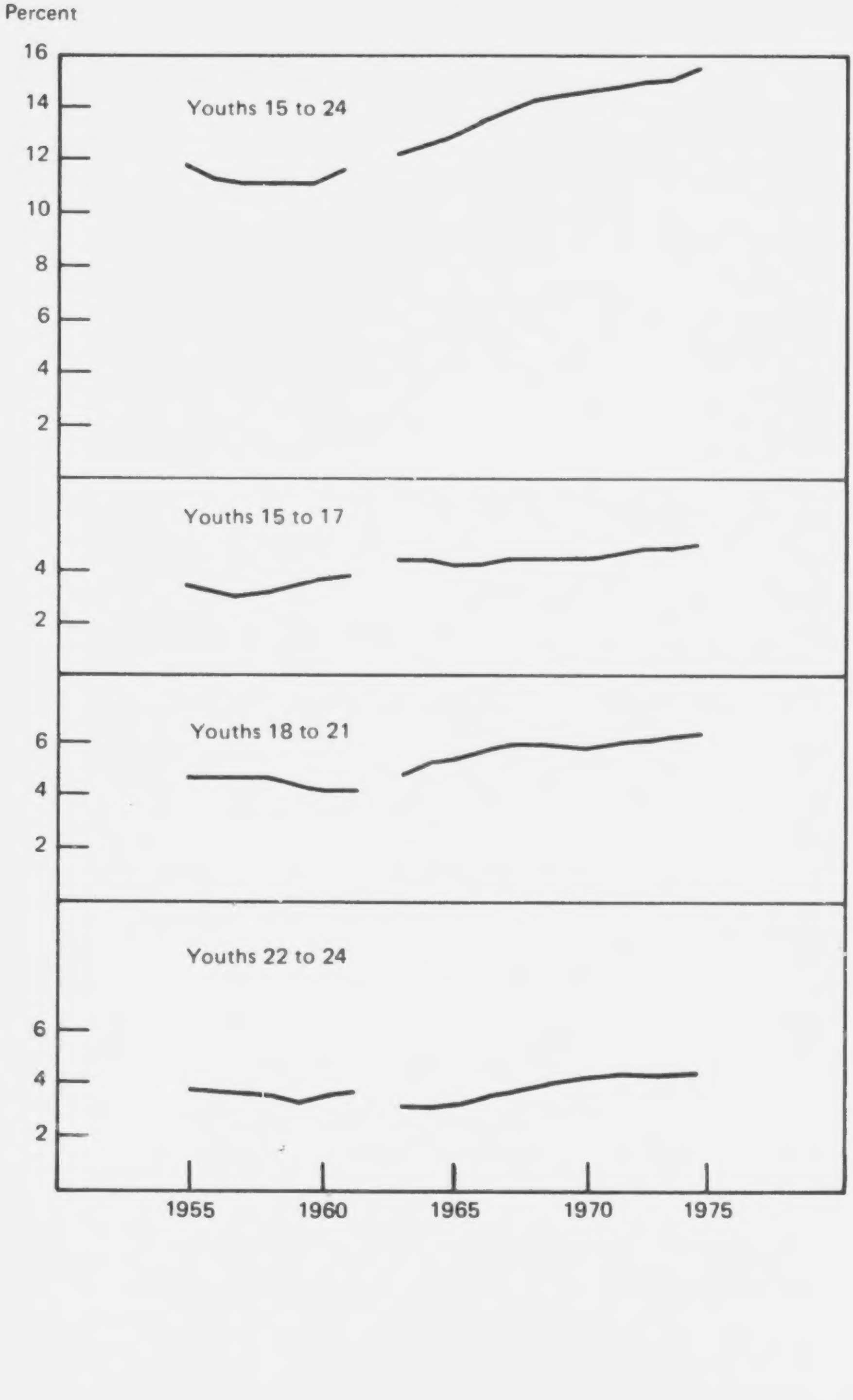


Table 2. Percentage of population aged 15–19 and 20–24 in the three regions of the country, 1961 and 1970

Date and age group	*Brussels*	*French-speaking region*[a]	*Dutch-speaking region*	*Total*
1961				
15–19	9.3	30.5	60.2	100.0
20–24	10.1	30.0	59.9	100.0
1970				
15–19	9.1	32.6	58.3	100.0
20–24	11.0	33.1	55.9	100.0

[a] Includes some German-speaking areas.

Source: Belgium, decennial censuses of 1961 and 1970.

in this same age group (a somewhat larger ratio of men to women than nine years earlier). The point to be emphasized is that marriage is not a dying custom in Belgium; people are marrying earlier, and the proportion of marriages occurring at an early age is increasing more rapidly for boys than for girls, as Table 3 indicates.

Living together outside of marriage for young couples—for a "trial" marriage or a consciously temporary association—is obviously more frequent than in the past. I have personally had

Table 3. Percentage of youths, aged 18 and 24, who are married, 1961 and 1970

Age and year	*Male*	*Female*
18 years		
1961	0.8%	8.7%
1970	1.3	9.6
24 years		
1961	51.0	75.0
1970	60.0	79.0

Source: Belgium, decennial census, 1961 and 1970.

the opportunity to observe this way of life among students at the University of Brussels. It is true, however, that the number of unmarried persons living together as couples is relatively much higher in a university environment and in a large city than among other sociocultural groups of young people and in other regions.

2

Youth at Work

Labor-Force Participation

Among the very young (14 years of age) and those in their late teens (15 to 19), the number of Belgian youths participating in the labor force declined from 1961 to 1970 (Table 4). For 15- to 19-year-olds, the decline in numbers in the labor force was associated with an increase in school enrollment. Taking into account the growth of the population in this age group, the stagnation in numbers implied a substantial decline in the percentages in the labor force, as the data for both sexes indicate.

The trend was very different among those aged 20 to 24. The number in the labor force increased considerably, as did the percentage of that age group in the labor force. However, the increase in the percentage was entirely attributable to an increase in the labor-force participation of women in this age group—for men, the percentage declined somewhat.

Data on the labor-force participation of all age groups in Belgium indicate that the highest ratio of working women is in the 20 to 24 age group; after that, the ratio of working women to the total population of women in each age group steadily decreases, but remaining higher in Brussels than in other regions.

Differences among the three regions do not follow the same pattern for all age groups or for both men and women. For all persons aged 15 to 19, the lowest participation rate (30 percent) in 1970 was in Brussels, while it was 36 percent in the

Table 4. Youth working population by age and sex, 1961 and 1970

	Number (in thousands)		*Percentage of population in age group*	
Sex and age	*1961*	*1970*	*1961*	*1970*
Men				
14	12.7	6.5	1.1	0.6
15–19	154.8	153.1	50.3	41.3
20–24	242.3	307.6	87.6	83.3
25–29	292.8	281.2	97.2	96.0
Women				
14	8.2	4.2	0.8	0.4
15–19	120.7	123.1	40.6	34.5
20–24	143.5	215.5	52.2	60.9
25–29	110.0	140.3	36.5	49.7
Total				
14	20.9	10.7	1.0	0.5
15–19	275.5	276.1	45.5	37.9
20–24	385.8	523.2	70.0	72.4
25–29	402.8	422.5	66.9	73.3

Source: Belgium, decennial censuses of 1961 and 1970.

French-speaking region and 40 percent in the Dutch-speaking region; this reflects higher rates of school enrollment in Brussels. Differences are slighter for the 20 to 24 age group.

Along with changes in labor-force participation rates, there have been significant changes in the socioeconomic structure of the labor force. The census divides the working population into six categories:

1. Employers and independent workers (agriculture, industry, commerce, craftsmanship, transport, services, liberal professions).

2. Heads of undertakings under an employment contract (not working for their own benefit).

3. Employees (including civil servants, priests, teachers, military officers, judges, staff members, policemen).

4. Workers (all categories, including agriculture, foremen, at-home workers).

5. Auxiliary workers (wives, sons or daughters working regularly in a family shop, or in assimilated kinds of work).

6. Unknown activities.

There were a number of significant changes in the types of work performed by young people from 1961 to 1970 (Table 5). Women, who participate more and more, have tended increasingly to become employees (especially teachers). In fact, in the 20 to 25 age group, a majority of women (58 percent) were employees in 1970, whereas, for men in this age group, only 31 percent were employees and 60 percent were workers.

Younger men 15 to 20 have tended increasingly to be employed as workers. Among men 20 to 25, the increase in the percentage employed as workers from 1961 to 1970 was less pronounced, and there was a decrease among those 25 to 30. These contrasts indicate that rising school enrollments and the relative lack of qualifications of younger men who leave school at an early age tend to enlarge the gap between these young men and those who go to work after more prolonged study.

The proportion of young people who are employers and independent workers is, of course, smaller than in the total structure of the working population.

In Belgium, as elsewhere, the proportion of young people employed as auxiliary workers has tended to decline, reflecting the decrease in the relative importance of employment in agriculture and in small business. Moreover, the recession that began in 1974 wiped out or severely changed many marginal firms, activities, technical skills, and occupations. The pressure toward concentration of firms and specialization of occupations has been very strong in this period.

Youth Unemployment

The number of persons officially included among the unemployed varies among countries, of course, according to legal provisions and socioeconomic status. In Belgium, to be registered and compensated, an unemployed person must have worked a minimum of 300 days. In this case, he will receive 60 percent of the average salary earned during the last six months, with a minimum of 10,500 Belgian francs (about $273) a month and a maximum of 615 francs (about $16) a day. The amounts are adjusted for changes in the cost of living. The

Table 5. Percentages of the youth working population in each socioeconomic group, by age and sex, 1961 and 1970

Year and socioeconomic group	Men			Women			Total		
	15–20	20–25	25–30	15–20	20–25	25–30	15–20	20–25	25–30
1961									
All workers	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%
Employers and independent workers	0.7	4.7	11.4	1.9	5.7	12.0	1.3	5.1	11.6
Employers under contract	0.0[a]	0.1	0.3	0.1	0.3	0.8	0.0[a]	0.2	0.5
Employees	8.0	23.2	29.2	26.3	44.1	39.8	16.1	31.0	32.1
Workers	61.8	55.6	53.0	62.7	41.0	38.1	62.2	50.1	48.9
Auxiliary workers	12.9	7.7	4.0	6.8	6.6	7.2	10.3	7.3	4.8
Unknown	16.6	8.6	2.1	2.2	2.3	2.1	10.2	6.3	2.1
1970									
All workers	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0
Employers and independent workers	0.5	4.1	10.1	0.7	3.7	8.2	0.6	3.9	9.4
Employers under contract	0.0[a]	0.3	0.8	0.1	0.5	0.8	0.1	0.4	0.8
Employees	13.3	30.8	38.0	34.9	57.8	55.8	23.5	42.2	43.8
Workers	79.1	60.4	48.8	60.3	34.5	29.8	70.1	49.5	42.7
Auxiliary workers	6.7	4.0	1.8	3.6	3.1	4.9	5.3	3.6	2.8
Unknown	0.4	0.4	0.5	0.4	0.4	0.5	0.4	0.4	0.5

[a] Less than 0.05 percent.

Source: Belgium, decennial censuses of 1961 and 1970.

minimum represents a very low level of living, while the maximum affects only highly qualified employees and means a large loss in income for them. If the unemployed person is not a family head (married or not), the compensation decreases by 40 percent after one year, and the individual remains subject to the tax system. Family allowances are maintained in favor of children of the unemployed.

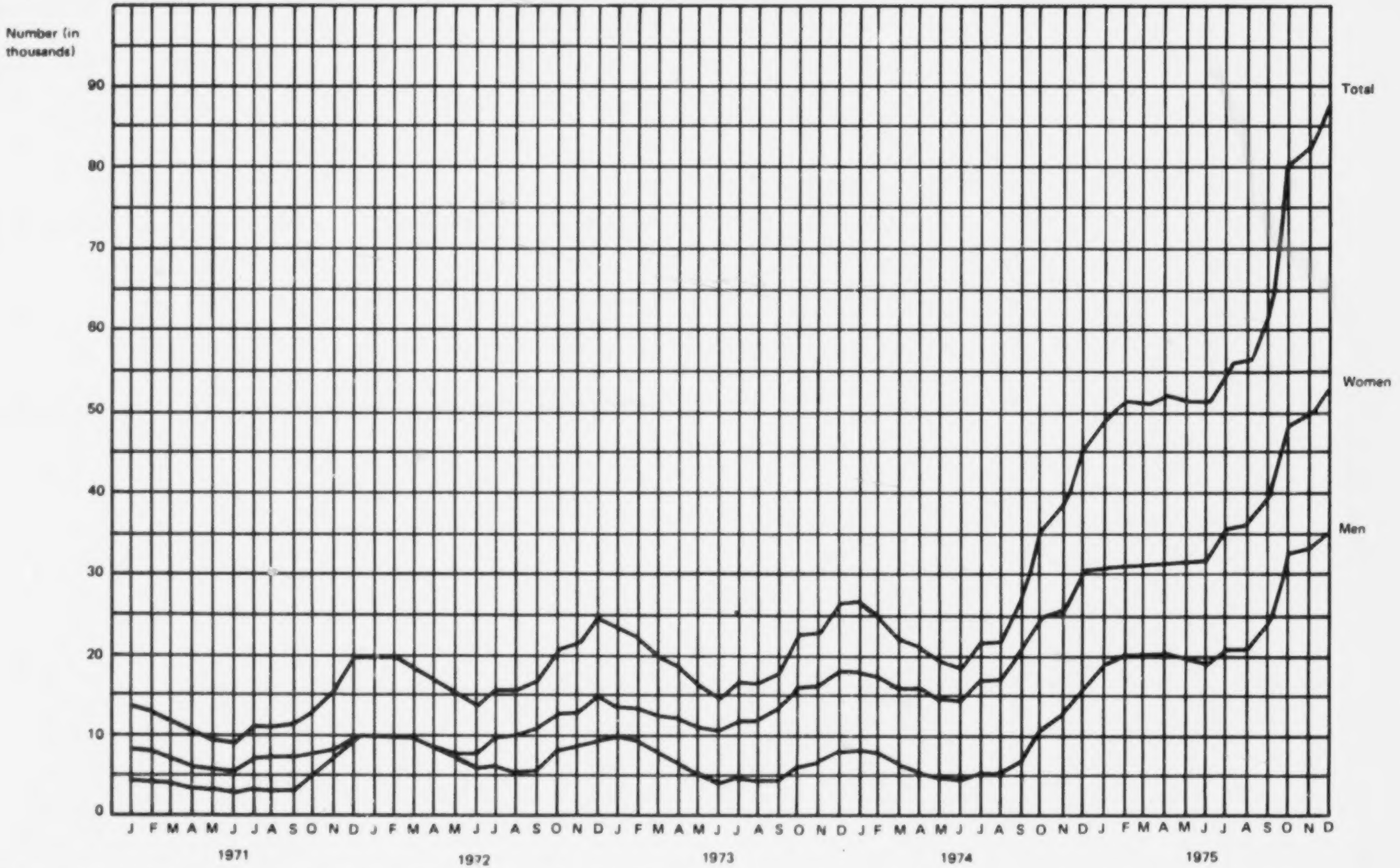
Young dropouts or graduates may become registered and compensated after 75 days, but at the minimum level if not a family head. The unemployed must present themselves daily to the local controller of the National Office for Employment.

The unemployment rate in Belgium was very low throughout the 1960s and early 1970s (see Figure 1 in Gordon, 1979). Then, with the onset of the recession that began in 1974, it shot upward quite rapidly. Unemployment among young people under the age of 25 also rose sharply from the summer of 1974 on (Figure 2). Moreover, throughout the period from the end of 1972 on, unemployment of women was constantly significantly higher than that of men. This suggests the beginning of a structural phenomenon of young female unemployment.

Figure 3 shows unemployment rates for young men and women under the age of 20 and ages 20 to 25. Among those 20 to 25, the unemployment rate of women was higher than that of men in the same age group throughout 1959 to 1975. Furthermore, the unemployment rate of women in this age group increased constantly from 1971 on, whereas this was not the case for the men, whose rates displayed cyclical fluctuations. Since 1974, the impact of the economic crisis has affected workers of both sexes, especially women. Thus, structurally there has been a persistent problem of unemployment among women in this age group, and recessions accentuate the difference.

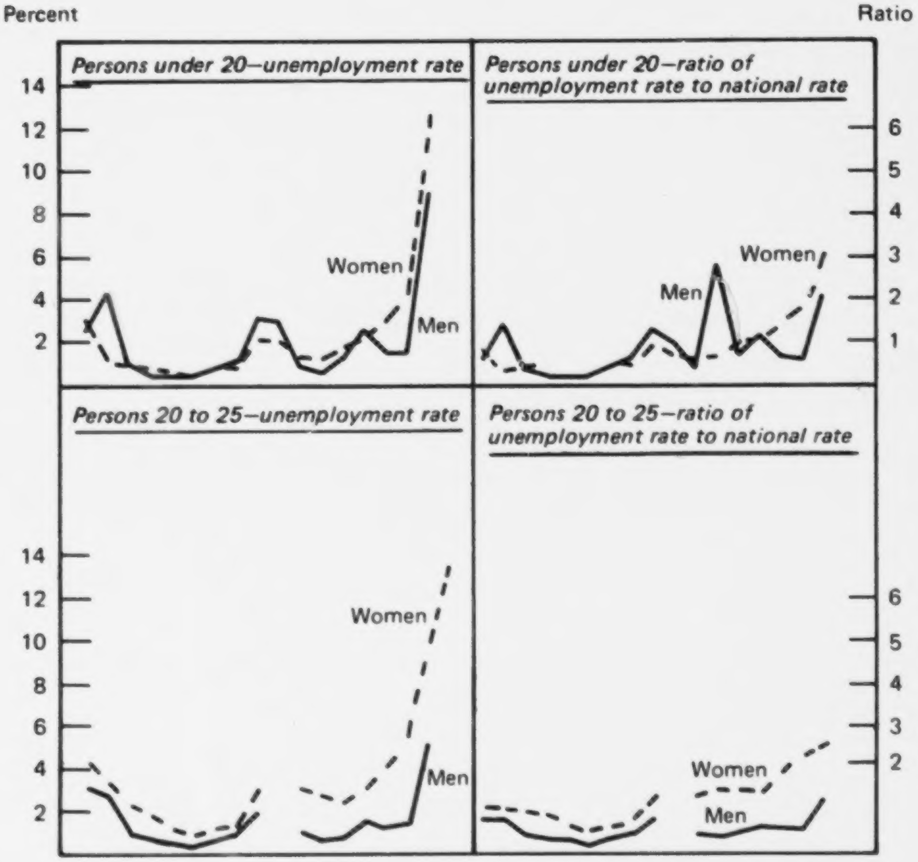
Significantly, however, among those under 20 years of age, there has not been a persistent difference between the unemployment rates of the sexes. Prior to the early 1970s, the unemployment rate of women was relatively more constant than that of men and in some years was lower. However, the crisis has also affected women in this age group particularly severely.

Figure 2. Changes in the number of totally unemployed under 25 years of age, by sex, end of each month, 1971–1975



Source: Belgium, National Office of Employment, *Annual Report 1975.*

Figure 3. Unemployed youths as a percentage of the working population in the age group, and ratios to national unemployment rate, by sex, 1959–1975



Sources: Belgium, National Office of Employment, 1975; and Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development, *Labour Force Statistics* (Paris; annual).

The persistent rise in *relative* unemployment among women is brought out clearly in Table 6, which shows how unemployment changed for the various age and sex groups from September 1975 to September 1976. For men the increase in unemployment was very moderate and for those under 20 years of age there was actually a pronounced decline. For women, however, the rise in unemployment was much more pronounced, though women under 20 experienced a slight decline,

Table 6. Changes in the number of registered totally unemployed by sex and age, September 1975–September 1976

	Men			*Women*			*Both sexes*		
Age	*1975*	*1976*	*Percentage change*	*1975*	*1976*	*Percentage change*	*1975*	*1976*	*Percentage change*
Total unemployed	87,277	90,559	3.7	98,681	132,426	34.1	185,958	222,985	19.9
Less than 20 years	9,132	6,450	-29.3	12,610	12,401	-1.6	21,742	18,851	13.2
20–24 years	14,748	15,170	2.8	27,012	37,045	37.1	41,760	52,215	25.0
25–39 years	18,601	21,505	15.6	31,469	47,872	52.1	50,070	69,377	38.5
40–49 years	11,980	14,474	20.8	14,116	18,524	31.2	26,096	32,998	26.4
50 years and over	32,816	32,960	0.4	13,474	16,584	23.0	46,290	49,544	7.0

Source: Belgium, National Council on Work (Conseil National du Travail).

and the hardest hit were women 25 to 40. Viewed from the perspective of the developments of the past several years, the unemployment situation of women appears catastrophic.

There was, however, a slight improvement in the comparative unemployment situation of youth between September 1975 and September 1976. The proportion of total male unemployment represented by men under 25 fell from 27.5 to 24 percent, while for women the corresponding proportion declined from 40 to 37.5 percent.

In terms of aptitude for work, young people under 20 prove to have a superior aptitude, according to data compiled by the National Council for Work. These findings are inconsistent with general Belgian public opinion, according to which young people show less aptitude for work than do adults. The record is least favorable for older workers (over 40 years of age). If, however, we consider the proportions of each age group unemployed in relation to degree of aptitude, we find that normal aptitude does not protect young people against unemployment. This suggests that there is some prejudice against youth in the labor market, perhaps because they seem less responsible and lacking in experience. In addition, at ages 19 to 20 the danger of being drafted into the military is a negative employment factor.

On a national basis, unemployment improved very slowly from September 1975 to September 1976; the rate of increase slowed down, but the numbers continued to grow each month. An annual average of 6 percent of all workers with normal aptitude to work remained unemployed in 1976. In the spring of 1977, however, total unemployment fell slightly—from 265,000 to about 250,000. Of these, about 150,000 were women, while nearly 82,000 were young people under 25. Thus young people represented about one-third of the unemployed, and among these unemployed youth, two-thirds were women.

But in the autumn of 1977, the signs of relative economic recovery slowed down, and unemployment rates began to increase again—not just for seasonal reasons. In September, the national unemployment rate was 6.5 percent, and nearly three-quarters of the unemployed were women. Unemployment among those under 25 rose to almost 84,000, and 69 percent of these young unemployed people were women. In just one month—from August to September—the increase was very pronounced.

Unemployment of youth is especially shocking to the Belgian public; they consider it a "sin" of society to be unable to integrate a significant proportion of young people as normal workers and citizens. This shocked attitude toward youth unemployment is shared by the man in the street, parents, and young people themselves.

Tables 7 and 8 show data classifying young unemployed persons by their educational attainment (including the types of studies they had performed). Our hypothesis about the relationship between educational attainment and unemployment consists of two tentative statements:

1. The younger the unemployed, the smaller will be the proportion that have performed primary (compulsory) studies only.
2. The more numerous the unemployed of a given age group, the more numerous will be those among them who have performed only primary studies.

Let us now consider those who have completed university studies. During the period 1970 to 1975, as we shall see later, women represented only about one-third of all students. In 1970, among the women registered as unemployed, those who held university degrees were a smaller proportion of the total than among the men. However, in 1975, under the impact of the economic crisis, the proportion of unemployed women with university degrees markedly increased. In September 1976, 1,135 women graduates were unemployed, whereas the corresponding number of men was only 434, in spite of the fact that every year there are twice as many degrees awarded to men as to women. Thus unemployment for this highly educated group is also more serious for women.

Reflecting the general worsening of the unemployment situation from September 1976 to August 1977, the number of job applicants among holders of university degrees rose from 7,741 to 8,522, or 10 percent. A sex breakdown, however, is not available.

Table 7. Percentage distribution of totally unemployed persons under 25, by educational attainment and sex, 1970 and 1975

	1970		*1975*	
Educational attainment	*Men*	*Women*	*Men*	*Women*
General education				
Primary, whether or not completed	43.3%	36.4%	46.2%	40.0%
Lower secondary	4.1	7.7	3.1	6.0
Upper secondary	6.4	2.9	7.3	5.6
Technical education				
Lower secondary	10.8	7.6	11.1	7.6
Upper secondary	8.8	5.1	8.8	8.0
Upper, first degree	4.0	2.1	3.7	2.6
Upper, second degree	3.3	0.1	1.8	0.1
Upper, third degree	0.1	0.0[c]	0.2	0.1
Professional education				
Lower secondary	9.4	11.8	10.8	12.8
Upper secondary	0.5	3.7	0.6	6.3
Complementary	0.1	0.4	0.0[c]	0.4
Normal school education[a]				
Preprimary	0.0[c]	9.5	–	3.1
Primary	1.6	5.8	0.3	1.2
Competitive examination, lower technical secondary	0.1	1.4	0.2	0.7
Competitive examination, upper technical secondary	0.1	0.4	–	–
Competitive examination, *régents*[b]	0.5	2.0	1.1	2.7
Competitive examination, evening course	0.0[c]	0.0[c]	0.0[c]	0.0[c]
University	1.5	0.4	2.4	1.2
Completed apprenticeship	2.1	0.9	2.1	1.2
Other studies	3.3	1.9	0.3	0.4

[a] Normal schools train the teachers for preprimary to lower secondary level instruction (inclusive).

[b] In principle, "regents" are teachers for scientific disciplines or for literary disciplines for the lower secondary level.

[c] Less than 0.05 percent.

Source: Belgium, National Office of Employment.

Table 8. Totally unemployed women, by age and educational attainment, September 1976

Educational attainment	*Under 25*		*25 or over*		*Total*	
	Number	*Percent*	*Number*	*Percent*	*Number*	*Percent*
Total	46,907	100.0%	76,363	100.0%	123,333	100.0%
General education						
Primary, whether or not completed	19,870	42.3	55,998	73.3	75,868	61.5
Secondary	5,643	12.0	6,661	8.8	12,304	10.0
Technical education	8,137	17.3	5,048	6.6	13,185	10.7
Professional education	9,558	20.3	5,881	7.7	15,439	12.6
Normal school education[a]						
Preprimary and primary	1,275	2.7	857	1.1	2,132	1.7
Other	1,198	2.6	535	0.7	1,733	1.4
University	508	1.1	627	0.8	1,135	0.9
Completed apprenticeship	604	1.3	286	0.4	890	0.7
Other studies	177	0.4	470	0.6	647	0.5

[a] Normal schools train teachers for preprimary to lower secondary level instruction (inclusive).

Source: Belgium, National Office of Employment, [Collection études economiques et sociales (Collection of Economic and Social Studies)] (C.N.T.-C. 40-D. 76-23. C.C.E. 1976/545. September 1976).

Policy Measures

We emphasize that the numbers and proportions just discussed represent unemployment that exists in spite of efforts to improve employment opportunities of young people. However, the phenomenon of unemployment as a possible continuing problem is relatively recent (the starting point was the midsummer of 1974). Thus, since labor policy in favor of youth is more or less recent, its implementation is partial and the results are not yet known.

In combatting unemployment, general antirecession economic policy (including cooperation among the Western countries) must ultimately be given primary emphasis in a program to reduce unemployment as a whole (including youth unemployment). But as long as unemployment of youths remains a significant fact, special measures are necessary.

In the first place, we must take into account the fact that young people, with their families' approval, often prefer to continue their studies, entering university or nonuniversity postsecondary education, rather than be registered as unemployed. This is clearly not a policy measure, but it does have the effect of reducing the numbers of youthful jobseekers.

In fact, as we shall see at a later point, the higher education system in Belgium is largely open, selection taking place not at entrance but through performance in the studies themselves (especially at the end of the first year, which is a "turning point").* In fact, higher education now serves a "parking" function for many. This is reflected in the recent increase in the number of new entrants to the universities and other postsecondary institutions. In 1974–75, the increase for universities was 2.5 percent (1 percent represents around 800 students), while other postsecondary (nonuniversity) institutions showed a growth rate of 13.7 percent in 1973–74. Taking into account the widely accepted opinion that those receiving degrees in the coming years will tend to experience unemployment, the "waiting" seems to be an important reaction to the menace of immediate unemployment. In any case, it is a way of using time fruitfully instead of being in a rejected status.

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*The exceptions are the faculties for applied sciences (engineering, which has a legal selective entrance examination); recently the faculties in medicine adopted screening measures to adjust the numbers to the training capacities of university hospitals.

Second, a very active network of vocational centers–aimed at readaptation through more training–has been developed and has been used by unemployed youth more than in proportion to their share of unemployment. These centers serve as buffer institutions between studies and work, with the subsistence costs of the learners covered by unemployment insurance. However, it appeared that unemployed youth needed more individualized care and guidance. For this reason, the government decided late in 1974 that the National Office of Employment (ONEM) should be required to create "special centers for the observation and orientation of the young unemployed."

Under the program of these centers, the first step is to test the skills and aspirations of the young and to adapt them to possible job opportunities with the least cost of time and effort. The second step consists of building up schemes of realistic and enriching motivation based on the personalities of the young. The third step, if immediate adaptation proves insufficient, consists in determining the specific program of studies and training that the individual might follow in a given vocational center. At this stage, also, the possibility of a "term of probation" in a private firm or in public service is investigated.

It is too early to determine the results of this program, but it seems that the process, which started on an experimental basis, is likely to play the expected intermediary role of paramount importance. Let us not forget, however, that even the most successful process of vocational training cannot create more jobs. In the long run, higher qualifications and appropriate adaptation of manpower might play a role in improving productivity and, in this way, the competitive power of the national economy. But this is a very lengthy process.

A third measure against unemployment involves facilitating the entry of young people into employment by influencing the "terms of probation" for those seeking work. The principle is to transform a first period of unemployment into a term of probation, that is, to transform the young unemployed into probationers. The method is to determine a probationary term consistent with the studies performed (a reasonable adaptation or reorientation often being necessary). Within the public services, difficulties arose over budgetary allocations for the program, because there are always cuts in times of crisis. Within private firms, where the periods of probation might lead to further careers, the obstacle was reluctance to receive unneeded workers during a period of retrenchment. This became translated into disputes over the real financial burden of the process. After the first efforts revealed the difficulty of implementing the program, the government decided that compulsory legal quotas were the only solution.

The economic recovery law of March 30, 1976, included articles organizing "terms of probation" for unemployed persons under 30 who had never been employed before and were holders of degrees awarded at the end of regular studies. All private firms and public services employing more than 100 workers were compelled to employ about one percent of probationers (*stagiaires* in French) for a period of six months, with a salary that was between unemployment compensation and normal pay. The ONEM budget provides for part of the cost, using savings in unemployment compensation resulting from the program, with the rationale that "it is better to pay a little more for work than for compulsory leisure."

Application of the law, however, seems to be difficult. The trade unions are suspicious because they fear the law will result in creation of legally underpaid manpower. Statistical results are not yet available, although the general impression is that results are far from those anticipated on a legal basis.

A fourth employment measure is a developing effort on the part of the school system to create and strengthen bridges between study and work. For example; the Minister of National Education (French-speaking sector) recently created the *Centre de recherche et d'information sur les Études et les Professions* (Center for Research and Information on Studies and Work Activities–CRIEP.) This institution seeks the active participation of all the involved ministries (including ONEM), of the employer and trade union organizations, of the parents' federations and families' organizations, and of the two National Councils of Youth formed by the representatives of all the movements in the French-speaking and Dutch-speaking sectors. These movements include political, social, and cultural groups, as well as specialized groups such as scientific youths, musical youths, scouts, and so on. The goal of the center is to propose and evaluate policies on youths that will integrate studies, work, and leisure.

A royal decree of April 7, 1975, institutionalized the "Regional Committees on Unemployment" that were created on the basis of the proposals of the National Conference on Employment of April 1973. These committees bring together active representatives of education, industry, commerce, and the trade unions on a regional basis, in an attempt to integrate all the relevant institutions and socioeconomic forces to achieve maximum employment, using the most qualified workers possible. Youth is recognized as a basic factor in the objectives. The vocational centers and the "centers for observation and orientation for the young unemployed" mentioned above are, of course, basic means for achieving this regional policy. A very important part of the process is the "recycling" of specialized teachers from technical schools in order to adapt the training of students to the actual skills needed by industries in the region. In fact, associations of employers have themselves organized this kind of retraining–for example, Fabrimetal (the federation of metal industries), the Belgian bank associations, insurance companies, and others. A few years ago, the federation of contractors created a fund for occupational training in the use of new materials and new types of equipment; the fund is used to train teachers of building activities in technical and vocational schools.

In this connection, there exists in all technical schools a managing committee–or at least a consultative body–composed of representatives of employers and trade unions in the region. In difficult periods when problems such as changes in technology, changes in the division of labor, or unemployment arise, these committees and bodies become decisive work groups. But all of these processes are merely methods to build bridges between the existing school system and the existing jobs. Sociologically it is a coadaptation process of great importance, but with very definite limits.

3

Belgian Education

Enrollment of children and youth in the various parts of the Belgian school system in 1975-76 is indicated in Table 9, which the reader will find a convenient point of reference throughout this section. The total number of students (full-time and part-time) was 2,335,000, or 24 percent of the total population. However, pupils younger than 15 accounted for 1,735,000, or nearly three-fourths of the total. Thus, enrolled youth in the 15 to 24 age group totalled about 600,000, or approximately 40 percent of the age group. On the basis of data for 1969–70 relating to full-time students (see Table 12), we may estimate from past enrollment trends that about 500,000 were full-time students and 100,000 were workers or employees enrolled in part-time studies.

The total number of students enrolled in the general upper secondary level was about 200,000, while there were 83,000 students in universities. Those involved in technical studies (upper and higher) appeared to be nearly 160,000.

Lower-Secondary Level

We begin our more detailed discussion of school enrollment with the lower-secondary level. At first glance, this level does not seem to involve the age group with which this study is concerned, since it normally enrolls those aged 12 to 14. However, also enrolled in the lower-secondary schools are significant numbers of laggers in the 15 to 18 age group (Table 10). If we take the total number of laggers among boys aged 15 to 18, we

Table 9. Youth at school by sex, level, and type of studies, 1975–76

Educational attainment	*Male*	*Female*	*Total*
Preprimary			
Ordinary	221,996	212,979	434,975
Special	1,754	1,192	2,946
Primary + 4th degree (ages 12 to 14)			
Ordinary	470,203	450,900	921,103
Special	23,453	14,459	37,912
Secondary			
General			
Traditional lower	88,201	81,263	169,464
Traditional upper	60,914	55,003	115,917
Technical			
Traditional lower	72,179	45,080	117,259
Traditional upper	36,558	32,780	69,338
Vocational			
Traditional lower	29,169	46,828	75,997
Traditional upper	4,570	31,170	35,740
Renewed (lower and upper)	105,567	90,689	196,256
Normal schools			
Preprimary	4	973	977
Primary	1,499	3,774	5,273
Secondary	3,757	6,303	10,060
Technical secondary	580	1,532	2,112
Technical			
1st degree	15,933	22,407	38,340
2nd degree	10,783	659	11,442
3rd degree	4,427	2,182	6,609
Universities	55,587	27,514	83,101
Total	1,207,134	1,127,687	2,334,821

[a] 60 percent at the "lower" level.

find they comprised nearly half of the pupils aged 14 enrolled in 1971–72. Among girls, the number of laggers 15 to 18 years old was only 10,000, or about one-third of the pupils enrolled at the 14-year-old level. Although the table shows that the situation was worse in 1960–61 and 1965–66 than in 1971–72, the phenomenon was of the same general order of magnitude. Let us remember that girls, on the average, are more adapted to the school system than are boys—that is, they are more conformist and more motivated.

Table 10. Number of pupils enrolled in lower general secondary schools, by sex and age, 1960–61, 1965–66, and 1971–72

	1960–61		*1965–66*		*1971–72*	
Age	*Male*	*Female*	*Male*	*Female*	*Male*	*Female*
12	24,005	22,859	28,054	26,212	36,042	33,520
13	30,040	26,065	31,122	27,661	36,568	34,020
14	26,386	22,800	26,262	24,181	31,493	29,775
15	11,993	8,721	12,348	9,400	11,072	7,864
16	3,966	2,836	3,598	2,724	2,945	1,868
17	846	696	742	648	577	350
18	114	191	97	139	94	65
Total	99,799	86,209	104,498	92,772	121,014	109,342

Source: Belgium, Direction Générale de l' Organisation des Études (Ministère éducation nationale française).

These laggers have little chance of pursuing further studies. They represent a fraction of youths "against school," with a bad start in life. Many of them are antisocial as well and in many cases engage in deviant, dysfunctional behavior. We shall return to this question in our discussion of social origins and studies, because lagging in studies is related to the sociocultural status of families.

The data in Table 10 relate only to those enrolled in general lower secondary education. However, the situation is very bad also in the technical sector and in the vocational/technical programs as well. Before discussing this, we need to define the content of these two sectors.

At the lower-secondary level, the purely technical sector provides training for semiqualified skills in mechanics, decorative arts, domestic work, body and beauty care, tourism and so on. (Higher qualifications will be attained by those who go on to the upper secondary technical level.) The vocational/technical sector provides less qualified skills than the technical sector: domestic dressmaking, low domestic training, elementary mechanics, building work, commerce, textiles, wood, tourism, iron work, and so on.

Although we do not have complete data for the number of laggers in the lower technical and vocational/technical secondary schools, we can develop estimates from statistics on the general secondary schools for the entire country and on all three types of schools in the French-speaking sector (Table 11).

Upper-Secondary Level

Once a student has progressed to the upper secondary level, where the normal ages are 15 to 18, schooling is no longer compulsory. The numbers of students and enrollment rates in 1960–61 and 1969–70 are indicated in Table 12.

At age 15 (end of compulsory education), the most recent census (1969–70) indicated a retention rate of nearly 90 percent. This retention rate decreased to nearly 37 percent by age 18. The rate for girls was equal to that for boys at age 15, but represented only about one-third (32 percent) at 18, compared with 41 percent for the boys. This retention, among the best in Western Europe, significantly improved between 1960–61 and 1969–70.

In 1960–61, 90 percent of men 15 to 17 were enrolled in the general or in the vocational/technical secondary level and were about equally divided between these two types of secondary programs (Table 13). A few were in normal schools, training for teaching. By age 18, only 68 percent were in the general or vocational/technical programs, again equally divided between them. Of the remainder, about half were in university or other higher studies, and the others were almost equally divided between teacher training and higher technical training. At age 19, the proportion in university or other higher studies was considerably higher, as would be expected, while the proportion in secondary schools was much lower, but still was about 40 percent (laggers who did not graduate at the normal age of 18). About 12.3 percent of 19-year-old men were in teacher training and 13.3 percent were in high technical training.

Among girls, the proportion in the general secondary level was lower than among the boys at ages 15 to 17, but was

Table 11. Estimates of the number of laggers in the three types of lower-secondary schools, French-speaking and Dutch-speaking regions, by sex, 1971–72

	General			*Technical*			*Vocational and technical*		
Networks	*Male*	*Female*	*Total*	*Male*	*Female*	*Total*	*Male*	*Female*	*Total*
Dutch-speaking	8,681	5,774	14,455	15,000	6,000	21,000	30,000	20,000	50,000
French-speaking	6,817	4,673	11,490	10,866	4,483	15,349	19,523	15,455	34,978
Total	15,498	10,447	25,945	26,000	10,500	36,500	49,523	35,455	84,978

Table 12. Number of young people enrolled in full-time study in school or postsecondary education, and enrollment by sex as a percentage of population in the age group, by age, 1960-61 and 1969-70

	Number enrolled			*Enrollment as percentage of age group*					
				1960-61			*1969-70*		
Age	*1960-61*	*1969-70*	*Percentage change*	*Male*	*Female*	*Total*	*Male*	*Female*	*Total*
15	75,429	131,093	73.8	65.6	58.6	62.1	88.9	90.3	89.6
16	59,227	100,030	68.9	53.8	43.9	48.9	71.7	66.5	69.2
17	41,657	78,811	89.2	41.3	30.1	45.7	57.0	51.9	54.5
18	25,434	51,462	102.3	31.2	18.9	25.1	41.0	32.3	36.7
19	16,279	36,247	122.7	22.5	12.4	17.5	29.9	21.1	25.6
20	12,091	24,979	106.6	16.5	6.7	11.6	22.2	13.0	17.7
21	11,509	18,594	61.6	14.3	5.8	10.0	17.5	8.0	12.8
22	6,034	11,031	82.8	8.7	1.5	5.1	11.3	3.6	7.6
23	4,300	7,485	74.1	6.3	1.1	3.7	7.9	2.1	5.1
24	2,317	4,144	78.9	3.7	0.4	2.0	5.4	2.0	3.3
15-18	201,747	362,196	79.6	48.7	38.8	43.8	65.0	60.6	62.8
19-24	52,530	103,480	97.0	11.6	4.4	7.2	16.0	8.2	12.2

Table 13. Percentage distribution of students by type of study, sex, and age, 1960–61

Sex and age	*Primary*	*General secondary*	*Vocational and technical secondary level*	*Higher technical*	*Arts*	*Primary teacher training*	*Lower secondary teacher training*	*University and non-university higher education*	*Unknown*	*Total*
Males (total)	29.0	33.3	26.3	2.3	0.4	1.8	0.8	6.0	0.1	100.0
15	2.6	48.2	46.5	–	0.3	2.1	–	–	0.3	100.0
16	1.0	45.1	48.5	0.6	0.5	4.1	–	–	0.2	100.0
17	0.6	45.1	43.3	1.9	1.1	5.8	0.2	2.0	–	100.0
18	0.3	34.2	34.1	6.1	1.6	7.2	2.1	14.4	0.0[a]	100.0
19	0.4	18.5	23.8	13.3	1.5	6.5	5.8	30.2	–	100.0
20	0.2	9.0	17.0	10.4	1.7	4.2	9.0	39.5	0.0[a]	100.0
21	0.1	4.8	11.4	22.0	1.7	2.9	8.5	48.6	0.0[a]	100.0
22	0.2	2.8	7.9	22.6	1.8	1.7	6.7	56.2	0.1	100.0
23	0.2	2.3	6.6	20.0	1.8	1.2	4.7	63.2	–	100.0
24	0.0[a]	2.0	4.4	17.8	1.7	0.7	3.0	70.4	–	100.0
25 or over	0.2	2.1	4.8	10.1	2.3	0.8	2.2	77.5	–	100.0
Females (total)	32.2	31.2	27.9	1.5	0.4	3.8	1.1	1.7	0.2	100.0
15	3.4	41.8	47.6	–	0.2	6.2	–	–	0.8	100.0
16	1.6	36.2	48.7	1.0	0.7	11.0	–	–	0.8	100.0
17	1.0	32.5	45.8	2.8	1.1	13.9	1.6	1.3	–	100.0
18	0.6	19.5	33.0	9.1	1.6	17.8	9.4	9.0	0.0[a]	100.0
19	0.5	9.9	25.9	15.5	2.0	11.7	18.1	16.4	0.0[a]	100.0
20	0.5	6.3	21.4	22.2	2.7	6.6	15.9	24.4	–	100.0
21	0.2	4.0	14.7	22.6	3.5	4.6	11.9	38.5	–	100.0
22	0.5	3.3	12.2	18.8	4.6	5.5	7.1	48.0	–	100.0
23	–	3.1	12.3	15.1	6.4	7.9	5.0	50.2	–	100.0
24	0.2	5.8	14.3	17.6	5.6	8.7	4.5	43.3	–	100.0
25 or over	0.2	4.0	16.8	25.7	5.6	11.7	6.4	29.5	0.1	100.0

[a] Less than 0.05 percent.

Source: Belgium, school census of 1960–61.

practically equal to that of the boys in the vocational/technical secondary level. From age 19 on, the proportion of women in vocational/technical training was considerably higher than among men—double at age 23 and triple beyond that.

What changes occurred between 1960–61 and 1969–70? We find that among the boys 15 and 16, about 90 percent were still in general or vocational/technical secondary schools in 1969–70 and were about equally divided between them (Table 14). But at age 17, the percentage in vocational/technical secondary training dropped, whereas the proportion in higher technical training was much larger than in 1960–61 (about triple). At age 18, a major difference in 1969–70 compared with 1960–61 was the much higher proportion in university and other higher studies—21 percent versus 14.4 percent. The proportion in higher technical training was also considerably larger than it had been nine years earlier. These differences were also apparent for 19-year-olds, with the proportions in university or other higher studies and in higher technical training considerably higher than they had been in 1960–61. Thus, over the nine-year period, the increase in access to higher studies was very noticeable in Belgium for young men.

Young women also showed an increasing tendency to reach higher levels of education. By 1969–70, the percentage of girls in the general secondary level was as high as among boys, and at age 17 there was only a slight difference. However, at age 18, the percentage of girls in secondary schools dropped sharply, reflecting, as among the boys, increased enrollment in university and higher technical education. At ages above 18, the percentages of women in both types of secondary education were higher than among men, but the numbers were small. The various stages in the transition from school to work in Belgium, for the two sexes combined, are indicated in Figure 4.

Considerable reform is taking place in the French-speaking schools at the secondary level. The traditional organization characterized by rigidly structured "streams" and by the conventional classroom system is being changed in the following ways:

- Three cycles of two years each—(1) observation, (2) orientation and (3) determination—are replacing the previous two cycles of three years each—lower and upper.
- There are no more "streams" with specific and rigid programs but more options consistent with a chosen general orientation (from age 14 on, a very free observation cycle), and a strengthening of the basic choices (quantitative orientation, language orientation, cultural orientation, and so forth) during the last two years, while retaining emphasis on basic knowledge.
- There is a continuous evaluation of performance instead of annual examinations, along with decisions on the annual reorientation by a council of the teachers.

This change took place six years ago. Thus, the universities are just beginning to receive, among first-year students, newcomers who have been educated in the "renewed" secondary level. The change, however, has only been partially accomplished. By 1975-76, there were about 115,000 in "renewed" programs and 200,000 in "traditional" programs in French-speaking secondary schools. Table 15 shows how they were distributed among types of schools under both free (Catholic) and official (public) auspices. Although "renewed" programs account for 37.5 percent of the students, only 21 percent of those in the Catholic schools are in renewed programs, compared with 50 percent in the public schools.

The Dutch-speaking schools are generally more hesitant and are still in an experimental phase. The Catholic and municipal schools are moving slowly, whereas the schools under the auspices of the state and the provinces have made a firm decision and are proceeding directly with the changes.

These reforms are too recent to permit drawing conclusions on the value of the renewed compared with the traditional programs or about their impact on enrolled youth. Furthermore, the budgetary cuts brought on by the economic crisis have not helped these reforms, which need financial resources for their accomplishment. Besides, there are many fierce debates about the respective values of the two systems. It is a new

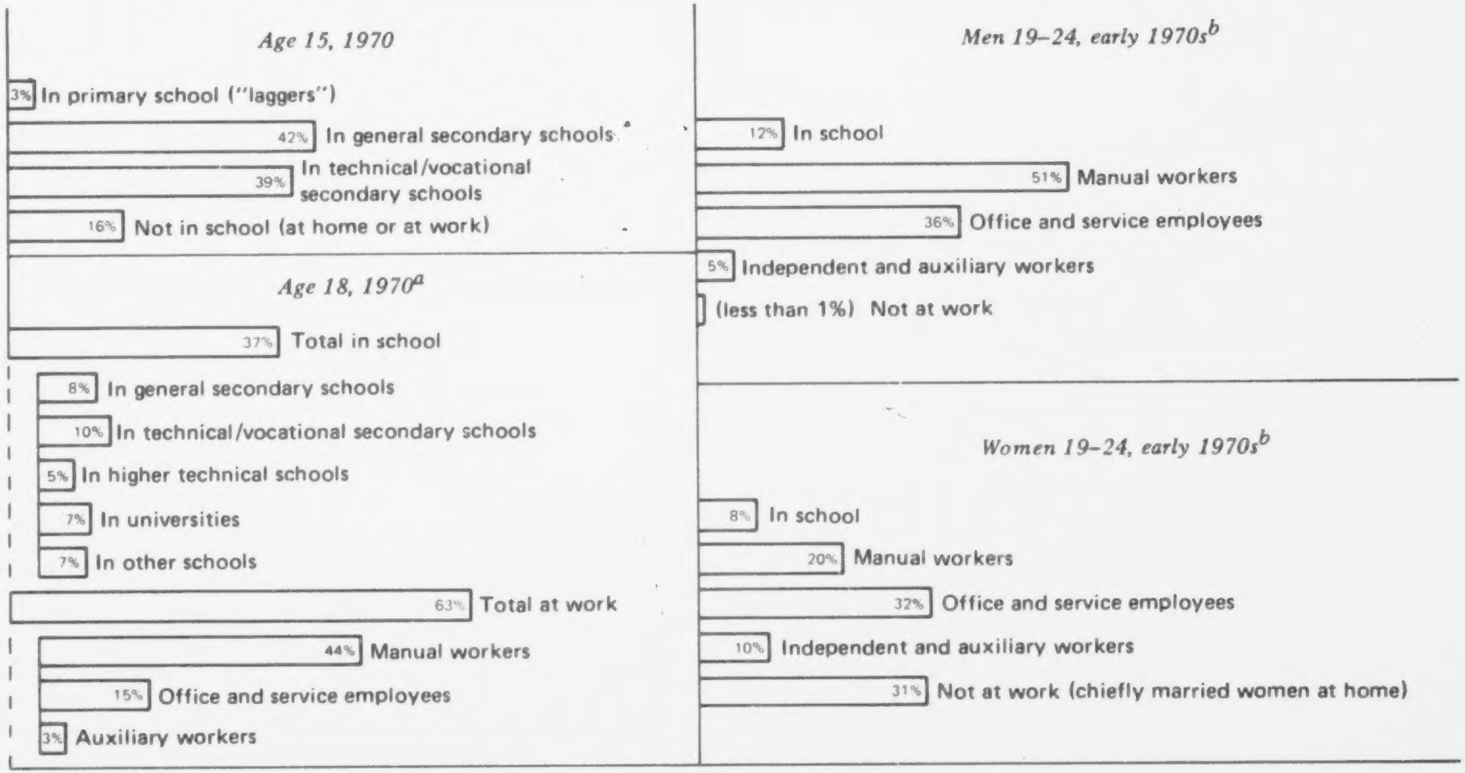
Table 14. Percentage distribution of students by type of study, sex, and age, 1969–70

Sex and age	*Primary*	*General secondary*	*Vocational and technical secondary level*	*Preprimary and primary teacher training*	*Lower secondary teacher training*	*Arts*	*Higher technical*	*University and non-university higher education*	*Unknown*	*Total*
Males (total)	31.1	27.7	24.1	0.3	0.4	0.8	4.5	9.8	1.3	100.0
15	4.4	46.8	46.2	0.1	–	0.2	–	–	2.3	100.0
16	2.6	44.8	44.8	0.8	0.2	0.7	5.6	0.2	2.3	100.0
17	1.6	46.5	39.1	1.1	0.3	1.2	6.1	1.8	2.3	100.0
18	1.3	28.7	28.7	1.4	0.9	2.2	13.5	20.7	2.6	100.0
19	1.2	13.7	19.1	1.2	1.9	2.8	20.0	37.7	2.4	100.0
20	0.9	5.8	10.9	0.8	2.5	3.3	24.0	49.3	2.5	100.0
21–22	–	1.6	4.9	0.3	2.0	3.5	21.8	63.2	2.7	100.0
23–24	–	1.2	2.5	0.2	0.8	3.3	14.2	73.9	3.9	100.0
25–26	–	0.6	1.6	0.2	0.6	2.4	10.2	78.2	6.2	100.0
27–29	–	–	–	–	0.3	2.0	8.2	82.5	7.0	100.0
30 or over	–	–	–	0.0[a]	–	2.5	8.6	79.3	9.6	100.0
Females (total)	33.2	29.6	24.1	1.2	0.8	0.7	3.9	5.2	1.3	100.0
15	4.6	48.5	43.0	0.8	–	0.5	–	–	2.6	100.0
16	3.0	45.1	41.5	2.7	0.3	1.0	3.9	0.2	2.3	100.0
17	1.8	43.9	38.9	3.6	0.5	1.4	5.8	1.8	2.3	100.0
18	1.3	20.7	27.1	6.1	4.0	2.4	16.2	19.4	2.8	100.0
19	1.5	8.4	18.6	4.6	6.6	3.1	24.4	29.8	3.0	100.0
20	1.4	3.9	11.8	2.4	6.1	3.5	28.6	39.2	3.1	100.0
21–22	–	2.1	6.8	1.1	3.6	4.1	21.7	56.7	3.9	100.0
23–24	–	2.9	6.5	1.0	2.5	4.4	10.9	66.2	5.6	100.0
25–26	–	3.4	5.4	1.1	2.2	5.2	10.1	63.2	9.4	100.0
27–29	–	–	0.1	–	1.8	4.7	15.1	67.7	10.6	100.0
30 or over	–	–	–	–	0.1	5.5	14.5	64.5	15.4	100.0

[a] Less than 0.05 percent.

Source: Belgium school census of 1969–70

Figure 4. Selected stages in the transition from school to work, Belgium



[a] Unemployment was negligible for this age group in 1970 but was an estimated 3 percent in 1976 (as a percentage of the age group).

[b] There was very little unemployment in this age group in the early 1970s, but estimated unemployment rates in 1976 were 4 percent of the men and 9 percent of the women (as a percentage of the age group).

Table 15. Numbers of French-speaking pupils enrolled in "traditional" and "renewed" secondary education in Catholic and public schools, 1975–76

	Traditional		*Renewed*	
Catholic	General	70,126	General	14,007
	Technical	47,374	Technical	17,164
	Total	117,500	Total	31,171
Public	*General*		*General*	
	State	37,433	State	42,338
	Provinces	481	Provinces	2,187
	Municipalities	9,922	Municipalities	1,528
		47,836		46,053
	Technical		*Technical*	
	State	5,367	State	11,087
	Provinces	8,198	Provinces	18,885
	Municipalities	21,315	Municipalities	7,878
		34,880		37,850
	Total	82,716	Total	83,903
Total		200,216		115,074

version of the *querelle des Anciens et des Modernes*—the conflict between old and new. Personally, I favor the "renewed" secondary programs in principle. The flexibility of the new approach to learning will favor adaptation to life and work and the achievement of greater social equality.

Higher Education

Enrollment in higher education amounts to 19.3 percent of the age group, which may be contrasted with the high enrollment rate of 15-year-olds in the first year of the upper-secondary level.*

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*All data on higher education are from the statistics of the Fondation Universitaire, Brussels.

In 1969–70, 87 percent of those leaving upper-secondary school received their certificates (diplomas) to enter the university. Not all of these certificates were used, however. The actual percentage going on to the university in 1969–70 was 64 percent, with relatively more participation on the part of French-speaking and male students.

By 1974–75, some important changes had occurred. During this five-year period, the percentage of the age group leaving upper-secondary school had increased to 24.6 percent compared with 19.3 percent in 1969–70. Moreover, the inequality between girls and boys was greatly reduced. In the last year of secondary school, the proportions of boys and girls are now about equal in the French-speaking schools, but in Dutch-speaking schools there is a small difference (48 percent are girls).

An interesting point, because it resists basic trends toward change, is the continued existence of a "scientific special" or elitist section found in the "best" high schools, based on intensive training in higher mathematics, which prepares students for the very selective "faculties in applied sciences." This section is small in numbers but includes 460 pupils in the French-speaking school system compared with only 172 in the Dutch-speaking system. In both systems, it is characterized by very weak participation of girls—only 85 in all—of whom the great majority (68) are in the French-speaking schools. It is disturbing to observe that the number of pupils in this section was higher in 1969–70 (722) than in 1974–75 (632). Perhaps the decline occurred because the future of industrial activities seemed less promising.

Among those receiving certificates of completion of upper-secondary school, equality with boys has been achieved by the French-speaking girls and approached by the Dutch-speaking girls, who received 43.5 percent of the certificates awarded to Dutch-speaking students in 1974–75. The decline in the rate of use of certificates—only 55.6 percent of those leaving upper-secondary school went on to the universities in 1974–75 compared with 64 percent in 1969–70—reflects the waning interest in attending universities. Even so, the absolute numbers entering increased from 15,594 to 19,538.

Two points need emphasis. First, the growth rate of new entrants, which was very high throughout the 1960s and the first few years of the 1970s, fell in 1972-73 and the following years (Table 16). However, the high growth rate for girls helped to compensate for the negative rate of boys. Secondly, girls have made remarkable progress. particularly at the upper secondary level, but noticeably more slowly at the university level. Only slightly more than 36 percent of the new entrants were girls in 1973-74.

Another point that needs emphasis is the importance of the last year of the technical section. In 1974-75, more than one-half of the total students in the last year of upper-secondary schools were in this section—amounting to 20,788 students.

A significant conclusion is that the transition from upper-secondary school to the university has until now been a real threshold, and heavy losses of the opportunity to study further occur at this point. However, there is continuous progress of the Dutch-speaking youth and relatively rapid progress for women. This trend raises the issue of the meaning of university studies. If they are considered as preparing young people for jobs of high status, enrollments will depend on evaluation of the labor market. If they are considered, on the other hand, as a means to self-accomplishment, the economic outcomes are less relevant.

University enrollments. The total number of university students was nearly three times higher in 1975-76 than in 1960-61 (Table 17). (Foreign students represented 12 percent of the total in 1975-76—four times more in French-speaking than in Dutch-speaking institutions.) Also striking, women numbered less than a quarter of the male students in 1960-61 and half of them in 1975-76. This means that women were 32.6 percent of the total in 1975-76, compared with 19.1 percent in 1960-61. As suggested earlier, the increase in female participation has been a factor in bringing about a slight growth in total enrollment in the 1970s, whereas enrollment of males has been stagnating. These developments are similar to those in the majority of Western European countries.

Table 16. Enrollments in university and nonuniversity higher education, and new entrants, first-level degrees, and doctorates in universities, 1966–67 to 1974–75

	Enrollments						*New entrants – universities*		*University first-level degree*		*Doctorates*	
	Universities		*Nonuniversity institutions*		*Total*							
Year	*Number*	*Percentage Change*	*Number*	*Percentage Change*	*Number*	*Percentage Change*	*Number*[c]	*Percentage Change*	*Number*	*Percentage Change*	*Number*	*Percentage Change*
1966–67	53,792	10.2	37,759	7.3	91,551	9.0	12,532	8.6	5,031	5.8	276	31.4
1967–68	59,172	10.1	40,777	8.0	99,949	9.2	13,615	8.4	5,729	13.9	245	-11.2
1968–69	64,779	9.5	47,432	16.3	112,211	12.3	14,755	5.7	6,565	14.6	332	5.5
1969–70	69,634	7.5	49,650	4.7	119,284	6.3	15,594	10.1	7,413	12.9	342	3.3
1970–71	75,106	7.9	–	–	–	–	17,178	8.0	7,872	6.2	338	-1.2
1971–72	n.a.	n.a.	n.a.	n.a.	n.a.	n.a.	n.a.	n.a.	n.a.	n.a.	n.a.	n.a.
1972–73	84,218	3.9	56,523[b]	–	140,741	–	18,522	-0.2	8,613	-1.2	455	0.1
1973–74	86,013	2.1	63,674[b]	12.7	149,687	6.4	18,299	-1.2	9,212	6.9	514	13.0
1974–75	80,980[a]	1.9	–	–	–	–	18,538	1.3	–	–	–	–

[a] Does not include higher technical education at the third level. The percentage increase from 1973–74 to 1974–75 has been computed from data for 1973–74 (79,477) which also exclude higher technical education at the third level.

[b] Does not include art education for Dutch-speaking students (1,128 students in 1970–71).

[c] Does not include higher technical education at the third level.

Source: Hecquet, Verniers, and Cerych (1976, p. 87).

Table 17. Number of students enrolled in universities, by sex, 1960–61 and 1975–76[a]

Age	*1960–61* Male	*1960–61* Female	*1975–76* Male	*1975–76* Female
Under 18 years	472	247	542	419
18	2,514	1,067	7,031	5,175
19	3,329	1,070	8,283	4,996
20	3,658	921	7,872	4,258
21	3,586	889	7,229	3,807
22	3,234	621	6,468	3,000
23	2,344	342	4,957	2,072
24	1,615	189	3,499	1,257
All ages	24,837	5,855	55,587	27,773
Total	30,692		83,360	

[a] Foreign students, who accounted for 10 percent of all students in 1965 and 12 percent in 1975, are included.

Source: Fondation Universitaire, Brussels.

If we compare the enrollment of students 18 to 24 in 1975–76 with the relevant age group in the general population in 1974, we find that approximately 8 percent of the age group was enrolled, compared with about 4 percent at the beginning of the 1960s. (The figure of 8 percent, of course, is only approximate, because the population data are for an earlier year than the enrollment data, and the age breaks are not quite the same; see Table 1 for the population data). However, the number in the 18 to 24 age group increased from 775,800 to 1,048,000 during the same period, so that an increase of 35 percent in the relevant population must be compared with an increase of 175 percent in the number of students. In other words, an increase in the social demand for higher education was far more important than the demographic evolution in explaining increased enrollment. Among women, 5.5 percent of the age group were enrolled in the mid-1970s compared with only 1.6 percent in the early 1960s. These data are consistent with those presented in the recent study by Hecquet, Verniers, and Cerych (1976), although the age group included in that study (18 to 20) differs from ours (18 to 24).

Nonuniversity enrollment. Higher education, of course, does not consist only of universities. Data on the nonuniversity sector, shown in Table 16, indicate that this sector continues to be less important in terms of numbers of students than the university sector, accounting for 42 percent of total enrollment in higher education in 1965–66 and 42.5 percent in 1973–74.* Although there have been some fluctuations from year to year in relative rates of growth, the nonuniversity sector has not been growing more rapidly than the university sector.

The nonuniversity sector prepares students for specific high-level technical jobs such as social workers, primary and lower-secondary teachers, nurses, staff secretaries, interpreters, professional librarians, technical engineers, artists, architects, actors, media technicians, and so forth. Its failure to grow more rapidly than the university sector reflects prejudices of both individuals and their families, who have tended to value the traditional prestige of the university as the best social and economic investment.

Nevertheless, there is a dialectical relationship between a very high sensitivity of the public to events in higher education and the traditional high regard for the university. The "hot May" of student unrest in 1968 exploded in Belgium as a consequence of similar events in Paris. In Belgium, the reaction took the form of an "occupation" of the center of Brussels University and of the School of La Cambre, a famed teaching institution for arts and architecture. In the fall of 1968, enrollment in the nonuniversity sector shot up by 16.3 percent, compared to 8 percent in 1967 and 4.7 percent in 1969 (Table 16). At the same time, however, enrollment in universities was not appreciably affected, rising by 9.5 percent from 1967 to 1968 compared with 10.1 percent in the preceding year. There was, however, an apparent impact on the number of new entrants, which showed a rise of only 5.7 percent, compared with 8.4 percent from 1966 to 1967. But in the following year, the rate of increase jumped again, as we shall see in a more detailed discussion of new entrants.

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*We have relied heavily on the study by Hecquet, Verniers, and Cerych (1976) for data on the nonuniversity sector. The Belgian portion of this excellent report, prepared by Hecquet and Verniers, who are Belgian researchers, is especially relevant.

New university entrants. The turmoil in the spring of 1968 did not have a lasting effect on the general attitude about the positive value of the university. Some newly affluent families, considering the possibility of higher education for their children for the first time, seemed to prefer the nonuniversity sector in October 1968 because of the troubled image of the university. However, following the slow-down in the fall of 1968, the rate of increase in university entrants rose sharply in 1969, suggesting a kind of compensatory effect. The rise was also quite pronounced in the following year. In any case, in my opinion, the exceptionally large increase in enrollments in nonuniversity types of institutions in the fall of 1968 must be related to the psychological consequences of the turmoil of the preceding spring.

A rather different phenomenon has appeared in the 1970s. As we saw earlier, since 1972–73, there has been a decided slowing down in the rate of increase of university enrollments and an actual decline in the number of new entrants in certain years. This development is not due to pure chance but is linked with the spreading opinion that the degrees awarded by the universities do not meet the structure of demand in the labor market. In fact, for the first time, unemployment affected graduates, and those that did get jobs did not find the type of job they expected on the basis of their degrees. Many of them were underpaid or misemployed, whether outside or inside the field normally open to persons with their degrees. This indicates a structural discrepancy between the production of graduates and the actual division of labor, a phenomenon that emerged just before the onset of the economic crisis, which tended to enlarge the gap.

Unemployment of graduates. In 1975, the total of unemployed graduates (of all ages) reached 3,255, of whom 2,051 were men and 1,204 were women. Unfortunately, we do not know how many graduates participate in the labor force, but the number of unemployed graduates in 1975 represents about one-third of the number who received degrees in 1973–74. We also know that the proportion of graduates among unemployed men rose from 1.5 percent in 1970 to 2.4 percent in 1975, and among unemployed women from 0.4 to 1.2 percent (Table 7).

In 1970, graduate unemployment was "frictional" temporary unemployment, although there was also a small number of people whose unemployment was attributable to individual lack of skills, personal characteristics, or ages. These causes of unemployment remain, of course, but do not account for most of the unemployment of university people, which increased by nearly 60 percent for men and tripled for women in 1975 after two years of economic crisis. In terms of numbers, the unemployment of male graduates tripled between 1970 and 1975, while that of female graduates increased ten times. During this same period, total national unemployment increased 2.5 times. Thus, the increase in unemployment has been more severe for university graduates, especially women.

Another development that confirms the new adverse attitudes about universities is that as the number of new entrants to universities fell, the rate of increase of nonuniversity types of enrollments rose—by 12.7 percent in 1973–74. Nonuniversity studies were considered more "specific" and more attractive than in the past and were also shorter and less selective. The economic crisis, as usual, tended to make the majority of people more realistic. Even so, as we saw earlier, nonuniversity enrollment continues to represent about the same percentage of total enrollment in higher education as in the mid-1960s.

After two years of economic recession, however, with the heavy increase of unemployment in Belgium, attitudes appear to have changed. Many people seem to think that, after all, it is better to participate in some kind of higher education than to be registered as unemployed (taking into account the low cost of higher education, the opportunity to get study allowances, and the right to continue to receive the relatively generous Belgian family allowances if enrolled in school). Thus higher education in a period of widespread unemployment is becoming, economically at least, a "parking" institution. As Cerych has shown

(Hecquet, Verniers, and Cerych, 1976), total enrollments grew significantly again in 1975, after an earlier decline in the rate of growth, in France and the Netherlands (6 percent and 6.8 percent), while the number of new entrants rose by nearly 6 percent in Great Britain and the Netherlands, and by 12 percent in Sweden.

What about Belgium? In the fall of 1974 university enrollment increased 1.9 percent, and in the fall of 1975 the rate of increase was 2.5 percent. The difference is not very conclusive, but nevertheless it is pertinent to observe that the negative rates of increase of new entrants in 1972 and 1973 became positive ones in 1974. Though the increase has been small, it supports Cerych's argument. The move is also consistent, however, with an improvement in the economic situation in terms of production, consumption, and exports, though the unemployment situation is still bad.

A slight renewal of the growth of enrollments seems to be correlated with a slight overall economic improvement. Taking into account, however, the structural gap between the production of graduates and the division of labor, it seems that the increase of new entrants conforms more to the "waiting" hypothesis than to the goal of specific preparation for entrance to the working population.

Entrants by fields of studies. There were significant shifts in the fields of studies chosen by new university entrants from 1965–66 to 1974–75 (Table 18). (In some cases, we have been able to add data for 1975–76 gathered by the Fondation Universitaire.)

In engineering—called technology in Table 18—there has been a relative decline. It seems that the needs of Belgian industry depend on a rigidly defined technological structure using a small number of engineers as organizational and technical staff. Engineering is largely a closed field for women, although there has been some progress, with an increase from 0.3 percent in 1965–66 to 1.0 percent in 1974–75 of women enrolled in this traditionally male field. However, one swallow does not make the spring, as we say in French. In 1975–76, the total number of new entrants of both sexes was 1,251, confirming

Table 18. Percentage distribution of new university entrants by field of study and sex, 1965-66 to 1974-75

	Men			*Women*		
Field	*1965-66*	*1970-71*	*1974-75*	*1965-66*	*1970-71*	*1974-75*
Total new entrants	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%
Pure science	14.0	10.5	11.2	16.0	12.6	14.1
Technology	13.2	9.7	10.1	0.3	0.7	1.0
Agriculture	4.1	6.5	7.1	0.4	2.1	2.8
Total science and technology	31.3	26.7	28.4	16.7	15.4	17.9
Medical science	20.4	26.2	26.5	20.2	26.5	26.2
Humanities	17.8	11.4	14.6	42.3	31.3	24.4
Law	9.4	13.2	12.3	7.9	12.5	11.6
Social sciences[a]	21.1	22.5	18.2	12.9	14.3	9.9
Other	0.0[b]	–	–	0.0[b]	–	–

[a] There are no relevant data for education and fine arts.

[b] Less than 0.05 percent.

Source: Hecquet, Verniers, and Cerych (1976).

the rigidity and selectivity of this technological field. In Belgium the five faculties of applied sciences have much prestige. They are the only programs with a legal entrance examination, which is highly selective and difficult. The small section of special scientific studies at the upper secondary level, discussed earlier, represents the only practical way to enter these faculties–in spite of the law prescribing that the only requirement for entry is to succeed in the entrance examination. Thus, the faculties of applied sciences play the same role and enjoy the same prestige in Belgium as do the *Grandes Écoles* in France. Moreover, the drop-out rate is very low, despite the pressure of sophisticated programs and high quality of performance. The same situation exists in the two Belgian *Écoles de Commerce*, with other highly selective procedures taking place through the whole cycle of studies. These are in fact business schools of high quality, such as the *École de Commerce Solvay* of the University of Brussels.

In the case of agronomy–called agriculture in Table 18–the relative number of new entrants of both sexes grew significantly during the period from 1965–66 to 1974–75. By 1975–76 it seemed that a stable level was attained. The attraction of agronomy may be explained by the concern of youth about ecological and environmental matters and the need for a harmonious coadaptation of man and nature. In fact, many new technologies are emerging within this field.

In medical sciences (including pharmacy in Table 18), there was very rapid growth from 1965–66 to 1970–71 but after that a slackening of growth. The proportions of men and women in this field behaved similarly, although the rate of increase in numbers of women was more rapid (reflecting the more rapid rate of increase in total enrollment for women). This is not a feminization process, as in Eastern Europe, but a move toward an equilibrium. However, the data compiled by the Fondation Universitaire, which separates medicine and pharmacy, shows a recent drop in the number of new entrants in the medical sections of the universities—from 3,601 in 1974–75 to 3,439 in 1975–76—as a result of the growing belief that there is a surplus of medical doctors, which is only true in the cities. But the number of degrees awarded will continue to grow for a number of years because of the increase in new entrants in the recent past (the basic studies to become a doctor of general medicine cover seven years).

In pharmacy—a section of the universities now dominated by women—there have been difficulties in opening up jobs for women graduates in recent years, with the result that there has been a real slowdown in the recruitment of new entrants.

In law there was a boom in enrollments in the later 1960s, followed by stagnation to 1974–75. There were fewer jobs for lawyers, especially for barristers. However, as a professor of sociology in the law faculty, I have been told that lawyers are frequently recruited for staff jobs in business firms. There was also a sharp increase in the proportion of women enrolled in law in the late 1960s, followed by stabilization of the proportion but a continued increase in numbers. In 1974–75, women represented a third of new law entrants.

In the social sciences, there was a steady and important increase in enrollments of both men and women from 1965–66 to 1970–71; women doubled their numbers in these fields in five years. But in the early 1970s, the trend was reversed, and, as an exception to the general trend (though paralleled in pharmacy), the proportion of women enrolled dropped sharply. The social sciences had become very popular after World War II, because the "social question" in all its aspects was at the center of political and cultural development in Europe. But the economic recession indicated clearly how degrees awarded in this field lack the "specificity" to qualify for jobs. The blow of the crisis hit the employment of university graduates in this field first.

Young people in the social sciences (still 18 percent of the men and nearly 10 percent of the women in 1974–75) tend, more than students in other fields, to participate in political and social action and to engage in very lively criticism of society and the "establishment." Their social origins, in general, are lower than in other fields. These factors explain why they are a ferment of activism inside the universities and a source of left-wing political militancy in general. This phenomenon is not a minor one, nor is its impact limited by the numbers involved, which are in fact fairly sizable. The consequences might be compared to those of the *Encyclopédie* in France before the Revolution. Now, however, the nucleus is not an established intellectual elite but a fraction of intellectual youths making youths appear—rightly or wrongly—as a central factor and basic problem in Western society.

Finally, we need to take account of the humanities—one of the biggest sectors of Belgian universities (21.8 percent of the total). Here, in contrast with other fields, there was a relative increase in enrollment among men from 1970–71 to 1974–75, following a decline in the late 1960s. And, although the number of women entrants enrolled in humanities increased throughout the nine-year period, there was a substantial decline in the proportion of women students enrolled in this field. The explanation of these shifts is to be found in changes in relative job openings in the secondary schools. The humanities indeed train teachers for this level, as do less exclusively the pure sciences. But the impact of changes in the teaching job market on those in the pure sciences is softened because of the availability of other types of employment and also because of the higher selectivity in the sciences. In the pure sciences, men remain predominant in numbers, with women representing 41.5 percent of the total. This is, of course, an example of the traditional image of women as less quantitatively minded and more attracted by literature.

Conflict and the structure of studies in the university. In 1974–75, 34 percent of new university entrants were enrolled in the two faculties–humanities and pure sciences–whose function is to produce secondary teachers. Students enrolled in these fields represented 38.5 percent of the women and 25.8 percent of the men in the universities. These students tend to be from middle-class and in some cases from working-class origins. They know that they are being trained for a vocational status lower in earnings and prestige than that anticipated by students in law, engineering, and medicine. They are educationally minded and eager to transmit their knowledge. They are very receptive to the message of the social sciences, in which they take courses that are common to a number of fields. This message, which tends to be negative toward the established order, becomes transmitted to youth by their teachers, especially at the upper-secondary level.

The impact of this phenomenon has been perceptible in Belgium since the 1950s and was important to the incidents of 1968. I do not want to formulate any value judgments about the contents of this "critical" ideology; in fact, I think that our society deserves many fundamental and obvious criticisms. What I am attempting is an interpretation of the mechanisms involving youth and the universities in the production and dissemination of this ideology. Many teachers at the secondary level, frustrated by their status and lacking other types of work experience (they leave school to go back to school), and devoted to cultural and educational work, are very susceptible to the critical, conflict-oriented, utopian approach to social problems, and in good faith they inculcate this ideology in youth. This does not mean that the majority of them are militants.

If one considers that large faculties are involved in this milieu, one must conclude that about one-half of new university entrants are exposed to this ideology and are affected by a propensity for negative political action and conflict. That does not fully explain the upheavals in 1968, which were not a pure product of the university but of the social system as well. However, it helps to explain why public opinion turned against the universities and became suspicious about youths; why the state imposed more and more control and restrictions on the budgets and on the management of the universities; and why nonuniversity types of higher studies were officially favored, developed, and more appreciated than in the past. But the situation is ambiguous and dialectical: the prestige of the university is so rooted in tradition that the evolution, after its massive growth in the 1950s and early 1960s, did not wipe out the shiny image of the institution. When the Queen sins, she is still the Queen.

Adults and the university. There is an enormous literature on the development of adult education and "permanent" or "recurrent" education. Many experts think that a better structure of higher education and, at the same time, greater equality of opportunity for all, will be realized by these new trends and principles. The British "Open University," the Empire State College of New York, and the Extended University of the University of California, which open the university to all age groups; the laws favoring adult education (for example, the expanded role of *Volkshochschule* in Rhein-Westphalia in the German Federal Republic); the educational paid leaves in many European countries—all these efforts are in the realm of recurrent education and increase opportunities for adults. In the traditional university, the goal should be to open it more widely through less formal requisites for entrance and through recognition of work experience, through more flexibility in options and in definitions of degrees, through compensation schemes for losses of earnings, through new degrees awarded after shorter studies, and through the organization of "distant" learning processes, such as correspondence courses, and the use of new technologies.

This trend toward recurrent education is very important for the youth problem, because the image of the university will totally alter if these changes are effected. It will no longer be an institution for a specific age group (18 to 25, the majority being 18 to 22), emerging from the secondary school without experience of life and work. Rather, the university will be an institution used by all age groups, including the elderly; it will no longer consist of continuous cycles of studies following the upper-secondary school, but of recurrent periods of studies with long interruptions. (The studies might frequently start after a more or less prolonged participation in real vocational work.) There are signs of this kind of development in the Belgian universities but they are very small and very recent. The most significant project is the Faculté Ouverte de Politique Economique et Sociale (FOPES), which was founded in 1974 to promote studies in the political, economic, and social sciences. The "Open Faculty" awards regular degrees (graduate level) and is open to people with enough experience (irrespective of formal prior studies) or to holders of the I.S.C.O. certificate (which will be discussed later). As usual in this type of institution, the choice and sequence of studies are very flexible. The sponsors and organizers are the Catholic French-speaking University of Louvain, the Christian political workers movement, and a Foundation *Travail-Université* (workers' university) promoting the training of responsible people for the trade unions and for other social institutions. They also train *animateurs socioculturels* (educators through informal ways). F.O.P.E.S. is too recent to be fairly evaluated. Besides, it seems to be heavily influenced by the university tradition: there is pressure to maintain the quality of awarded degrees because of public opinion, and this constraint favors tradition.

The age distribution of adults in the university showed amazing stability from 1965 to 1974. Adults represent only about 14 percent of the students (among them young medical doctors training for specialization and postgraduates pursuing their studies). The striking fact is the lack of change in age structure during a period of expansion. If one considers the age distribution of new entrants in 1974 the tendency is confirmed:

adults (23 years old and over) represent *less* than 4 percent. Eighty-five percent of the new entrants are 18 and 19 years old and are continuing their studies. The share of female students among adults entering the university (23 years old and over) is only 2.8 percent. Thus, we must sadly emphasize that in Belgium recurrent education toward basic degrees is still a negligible phenomenon through the channel of universities. Of course, there are many university study schemes for doctoral degrees and short recycling sessions and refresher courses for former graduates. The cause is obvious: universities remain traditionally closed to newcomers on account of prerequisites, modalities of studies, and examinations. This is confirmed by the fact that in 1973–74 94.6 percent of new entrants had a general school-leaving certificate (which is equivalent to the high school diploma). We must add that in Belgium no measures are taken to limit the number of young entrants in the universities, but public opinion increasingly considers this institution a producer of overqualified graduates who are ill-adapted to the needs of the economy. No wonder there are political debates about the need to organize a "numerus clausus"–a strict numerical limit on admissions–that would be either general or applied to overcrowded sections of the university. The Ministry of Education is studying a method to adjust the number of awarded degrees to the number of open jobs, especially for teachers.

However, the Ministers of Education (French-speaking and Dutch-speaking) first tried to establish a numerus clausus for entrance to the "normal" schools (nonuniversity type) training primary and preprimary teachers. Concerned public opinion, the youth movements, and the trade unions resisted heavily, and only dissuasive measures were adopted, like entrance examinations (not very selective). In the universities there are still no measures of this kind, except that foreign students from rich countries now have to pay fees more consistent with the unit costs of their section of studies. We still do not know the results of these measures.

An exception to the rule is that since the nineteenth century, admissions to the faculties of medicine have been proportioned to the capacity of hospitals to train students (the number of beds in university hospitals). Also, in some sectors of pure science, the selection is based on the availability of equipment, which is sometimes sophisticated and costly. However, there has been and is no general policy aiming, as in other countries, at upgrading nonuniversity studies, with an important exception due to the European Economic Community (EEC) concerned with "equivalences," that is, with the upgrading of the highest level of technical engineers to the university level, with the title of "industrial engineer." There is no policy to create new attractive institutions of this level, like the University Institutes of Technology (IUT's) in France or the *Gesamthochschule* (Comprehensive University) in the German Federal Republic. It has seemed necessary only to create a small number of new institutes devoted to training highly skilled people for the hardware and software use of media and communications equipment.

The following conclusions can be drawn regarding higher education in Belgium:

1. The general trend can be characterized as a tripling of the numbers of 1960–61, except that since 1972 there has been a stagnation (with a slight decrease shown by the new entrants); in 1975–76, there was again an increase, but it was very limited.
2. Female enrollment is growing very rapidly—more than male enrollment during the expansion period; this trend has continued, but slowly, compensating in total numbers for the losses of males.
3. The participation of the relevant age group in university education is relatively weak in Belgium—less than 10 percent of 19- to 22-year-olds (doubled since 1960–61). The participation of adults in the universities is very slight and does not increase.
4. However, nonuniversity higher education has represented about 42 percent of enrollment in higher education since 1965–66; this sector expanded at the same rate as the universities, but with little creation of sections for new kinds of studies.
5. As a result of the 1968 crisis, there was a momentary peak of new entrants to the nonuniversity sector in October 1968 *without* a decrease in the growth of the universities.

6. Unemployment among holders of university degrees seems to be slight but is growing more rapidly than unemployment among people with lower educational attainment; this is really striking for women. The reason is structural, but the economic recession enlarged the gap.

7. The renewal of increases in enrollment since 1974–75 might be explained by the "parking" function of the university. Analysis of the Belgian data tends to confirm this view.

8. The distribution of new entrants among fields of study shows that one-half of the students (social sciences, pure sciences, and humanities) participate in a mechanism producing a political and cultural counterideology out of a frustrated and relatively lower social status. The consequence—manifested sensationally in the 1968 crisis—is loss of support for the universities from both public opinion and political institutions.

9. If we consider the distribution of new entrants' fields of studies, we find that many fields have shown slow growth—in some cases a slight decrease—since 1972. The changes appear to correlate roughly with changes in the economy. Expansion of university enrollment seems to be encouraged by full employment. Stagnation and a decrease in numbers of entrants seems to be associated with a first phase of growing unemployment. In terms of entrance rates, the loss is substantial; in terms of numbers, it is relatively small. In a second phase, when it appears that the recession might endure, there has been a slight renewal of growth of total student enrollment, but in medicine, in pharmacy, and in the social sciences the decrease continues.

Regarding the sections of the universities that train teachers for the secondary level, the educational system is, to a considerable extent, a mechanism feeding on itself (nearly 50 percent of university enrollment). This closed circle constitutes a special milieu, with a considerable negative impact on the stability of the entire society, because its function consists of "processing" youth at the key ages of 12 to 18, before entry into society or into higher education—destined to form the elite of the social system. But the sectors training the people responsible for the economy and for the organization of the social system constitute together the "other" half of the university (medicine, engineering, law, business, and the most sophisticated sections of economics or of postgraduate studies). This technocratic product of higher education tends to resist strongly, at all levels, the negative critical ideology of the teacher-training section. The influence of upper-secondary teachers on the minds of students planning to study medicine, engineering, and so on is real, but has a weak political impact. These students remain conservative and in the university resist the critical influences. The explanation of these differences is to be found mainly in the social origins of the pupils at the upper-secondary and at the university levels. Here is a basic factor shaping differences in the minds of youth, differences that tend to become more and more pronounced in adult life.

Adult Education

Outside of the formal school system, there is a growing sector providing opportunities for studies for those who have completed compulsory schooling and are older than the normal age for participating in given studies. This is the sector of adult education modeled on the principles of "permanent," "lifelong," or "recurrent" education. In view of the recent marked expansion of initiatives in this area, it is not very easy to offer a complete survey. In addition, in many cases it is difficult to measure the participation of young adults, who are the focus of this study. We will try to give a sketch of the situation in Belgium.

Correspondence courses. The center for correspondence courses (*Cours par correspondance*) is a service of the Ministry of Education that was institutionalized by the law of March 5, 1965. The courses take the form of the exchange of written messages and materials between the teaching center and the learners. Since 1969–70 there have also been auxiliary verbal courses, designed to create a personal relationship between the teachers and the learners and to assist the learners in their methods of work. (In 1973–74, there were 7,737 sessions for the Dutch-speaking sectors.) At present the Dutch-speaking sector is preparing auxiliary courses through television and radio, while the French sector is investigating such a program.

In fact, the correspondence courses will soon become a kind of "Open University." We emphasize this development here because we know that the great majority of the learners are young adults.

The goals of correspondence courses are:

- To prepare for the examinations before the *Jurys d'État* (public boards) at the lower- and upper-secondary levels (general and technical). The degrees awarded are legally equal to the certificates awarded by the relevant full-time schools. In the French-speaking sector there are now 3,160 students, the great majority of whom are less than 25 years of age.
- To prepare for administrative examinations for many occupations and levels (for example, the examination for the occupation of administrative secretary, the lowest grade of the highest category, open only to university graduates or bureau chiefs in the ministries). Here again there are now 3,000 learners.
- To train teachers (especially in modern mathematics or in languages, audiovisual pedagogy, and so forth). A multimedia approach is used, and 4,000 young teachers are now involved in this process.

The total number of students involved in these programs is now more than 10,000, of whom the majority are young adults.

Teaching for "social promotion." Since World War I, a legal system has been built up piece by piece to provide opportunities for full-time manual and intellectual workers desiring more education. Now there is a parallel network of courses using the school buildings during the evenings and weekends and also using teaching equipment and full-time teachers. There are also evening teachers who come from office, factory, or civil service jobs. This teaching is organized in all types of schools by the administrative network that manages the school itself, but the staff responsible for these "promotional" evening schools is different from the regular staff.

This type of instruction is developing in all types of secondary schools—general, technical, vocational, and special (for people with handicaps)–and exists also at the higher technical level of nonuniversity higher education. It is available for all age groups after the compulsory period of schooling. In 1974–75, there were 180,000 students, of whom 76 percent were less than 25 years of age.

Table 19 provides detailed data on enrollment in the French-speaking "parallel" network. We observe the very large proportion of enrollment under the auspices of the municipalities (nearly one-half), followed by the Catholic school system (nearly one-third). The municipalities are the only sponsors providing courses in arts on an evening or weekend basis, and they are successful. More than 85 percent of the students, however, devote their efforts toward technical upgrading (that is, to the improvement of their careers) at the secondary level, and 6 percent aim at nonuniversity higher education qualifications. At the higher education level, we must call attention to the efforts of the provinces, followed by the Catholic school system and the municipalities. There are also more than 2,000 teachers aiming at being upgraded–from the preprimary to the primary, and from the primary to the secondary. All of these facts are very encouraging.

The situation is nearly the same in the Dutch-speaking school system, with the Catholic network playing a more important role and the provinces a less important role.

There are two types of "social promotion" courses: (1) long studies (that is, longer than the time required in full-time regular schooling), awarding regular degrees, which mean vertical promotion; and (2) short studies, awarding new certificates of specialization, which mean horizontal promotion (higher but at the same degree levels). The long studies, for example, award regular degrees of technical engineer or commercial engineer and licenses in accounting and financial sciences. The majority of students, however, achieve a legal technical secondary degree (originally they had only lower-secondary or complementary vocational certifications). Short studies frequently cater to the needs of workers whose employers, since World War II, have increasingly wanted their employees to obtain new degrees in communications, marketing, and the like.

Table 19. Enrollment of French-speaking young adults in courses for "social promotion," 1975–76

Types and levels of teaching	*State*	*Provinces*	*Munici-palities*	*Free (Catholic)*	*Total*
Secondary technical	12,862	6,513	37,099	24,133	80,607
Higher technical	906	1,659	1,498	1,570	5,633
Technical special	–	13	–	468	481
Normal technical, primary and secondary	281	901	301	695	2,178
Arts, secondary	–	–	3,757	–	3,757
Arts, higher	–	–	283	–	283
Total enrollment[a]	14,049	9,086	42,938	26,866	92,939

[a] We know that girls represent nearly one-half, but they are more numerous at the lower levels of these studies.

Source: Belgium, Direction Générale de l'Organisation des Études (General Administration for the Organization of Studies).

A ministerial decision of February 20, 1970, provided for the structuring of secondary part-time studies, technical and vocational, in terms of credits (*unités capitalisables* in French). This makes possible complete individual choice of the scheduling and length of the studies or allows the individual to obtain certification only for the courses he or she actually needs to achieve a personal, professional purpose. This sector, one of the most promising in Belgium, attracts an elite of highly motivated young adults and is a forerunner of "permanent" education.

The new legislation on crédits d'heures. A timid first step toward the new legislation on *crédits d'heures* (credits of hours) was a law of 1963 in favor of young workers 16 to 20. An opportunity was provided to get paid leave for a few days (no more than a week annually) for "social promotion" studies. The small budget covering this program was never fully used. The reason, I believe, is that employers, many of whom were reluctant to recruit young workers because they were "unstable," did not like this new complication in the organization of work, and their pressure discouraged workers from applying for the leave. This was followed, however, by the law of April 10, 1973, which provided for a program to remunerate the hours devoted to "social promotion" studies without loss of earnings. This law covers all workers and employees (including servants), Belgian or foreigners, of less than 40 years of age and occupied full time in private firms under a labor contract (the usual situation).

In the same year, the law covering general and vocational training was extended to architecture, industrial and technical design, and agriculture. The advantages provided are as follows:

- If the worker is a new entrant to studies, he or she will be released from work and paid for one quarter of the hours required by the chosen course (for example, the worker will receive full pay for 25 hours if the course requires 100 hours).
- If the worker has completed one year of a course covered by the law successfully, he or she will receive pay for one-half of the hours required for a new course.
- If the worker has completed two years of regular studies, he or she will receive pay for all the hours of a new course.

The *Conseil de l'Entreprise*—a legal institution composed of representatives of employers and employees responsible for all social questions and for the management of the firm—may organize the time schedules of workers or employees wishing to use *crédits d'heures*, or the schedules may be arranged under the terms of the collective bargaining agreement. In October 1974, the law was extended by royal decree to full-time workers who became new entrants into universities for regular courses on a part-time basis. Then in March 1975, also by royal decree, the law was extended to cover general courses aiming at economic, social, and cultural knowledge. The institution organizing courses of this kind was to be agreed upon by the government.

The financing of the *crédits d'heures* law is provided half by the state budget and half by a small employer payroll tax, which started at 0.1 percent in January 1973 and was raised to 0.2 percent in September 1973. The employer contribution is paid into a fund through the social security system. Thus the employer has no financial interest in discouraging use of the law. Nevertheless, it is once more discouraging that 90 percent of the employees entitled to benefit from the law did not take advantage of it. Only 12,233 workers took advantage of the law in 1973–74, and only 17,820 in 1974–75—though we know that 100,000 workers are part-time students in the network of the school system. (Among them, we must keep in mind the large proportion performing "long studies" through the "social promotion" scheme.)

In any case, what is important is that this legislation provides the principles and structure needed for a general organization of lifelong education. Passing a law is never enough; also required is the will of people (and that calls for education, also).

Vocational centers. The National Office of Employment (*Office National de l'Emploi*—ONEM) founded vocational centers after World War II that were open to all workers encountering difficulties in their jobs, such as obsolescence of skills, unemployment, industrial accidents, a need for retraining because of disability, a need to be "recycled," or a need to master new techniques and processes. They were also open to persons who had a capacity to be trained for higher qualifications needed by the economy. The centers were sometimes established with the help of decentralized bodies—employer organizations, large firms, or technical schools. When necessary, ONEM was allowed to require unemployed workers to submit to readaptation in a vocational center.

This network of centers, operated by the Ministry of Labor and Employment, might be called the readaptation educative network. With the onset of the economic crisis and the growth of unemployment, these centers, which are quite varied, became more and more important and were confronted with recurrent and pressing emergencies that were difficult to handle. But their work is valuable and useful, in spite of the fact that in this type of training self-accomplishment is necessarily neglected in favor of rapid practical achievement. Nevertheless, this training institution might become more positive as a bridge between studies and work in many ways, if it were no longer constrained by the impact of economic crisis. Moreover, from the perspective of our focus on youth, the ONEM centers give priority to young workers. There is a good reason for this—the young are closer to education, having been at school recently, and are more accustomed to educational relationships.

Apprenticeship. The principles governing apprenticeship, set forth in the Royal Decree of April 13, 1959, and revised by a decree of February 25, 1971, are as follows:

- There are two recognized statuses: qualification and independent employer (*patronat* in French). Qualification is performed by working under the authority of an agreed independent employer for a maximum of four years.
- Apprenticeship may begin only after compulsory schooling (after age 14).
- Qualification is performed under the terms of a written contract negotiated by an apprenticeship secretary approved by the Ministry of Middle Classes. This contract certifies that the legal conditions are observed.
- Under the supervision of the boss (the independent employer to whom the apprentice is linked through the contract), the apprentice is obliged to learn a craft by working and to enroll in technical courses organized by the Chamber for Crafts and Commerce and also in general courses organized or approved by the same body. The apprenticeship secretary supervises the entire process in order to ensure the observance of the legal conditions.
- The general courses are complementary to the practical ones and to training on the job. There are only 72 hours of courses during the first year, followed by 132 hours of general and 124 hours of vocational courses during the following three years. The courses are submitted for approval to the inspectors of the Ministry of Middle Classes.
- At the end of the fourth year, the candidates must take a qualification examination, successful completion of which leads to a certificate awarded by the ministry.

Young persons under 18 years old and who have a certificate awarded at the end of an apprenticeship or have a lower-secondary degree must serve a "term of probation" to become an independent employer. This is especially valuable for sons or daughters of independent employers (expecting eventually to take over the business of the father) or for young people provided with family investment funds to create a new business. Here they are trained to become independent employers with courses in accounting, social and financial legislation, and with practical training. This program takes two years. Certificate holders who can provide a financial guarantee are eligible for a loan from a special public credit network, the *Caisses Nationales de Crédit Professionel.*

The qualification stage has been subject to strong criticisms. First, many of these apprentices are used by their employers as a cheap and totally dependent source of manpower or as domestic servants, with vocational training neglected. The inspectors are too dependent on the Chambers for Crafts and Commerce, which in turn are too influential politically in relation to the Ministry of Middle Classes. Second, the general courses account for only three or four hours weekly, which is not enough. The technical courses also have too few hours of instruction. In addition, these courses, with some exceptions, are noticeably weaker than those under the supervision of the Ministry of Education. Finally, some critics claim the practical apprenticeship begins when people are too young (only 14 years old the first year).

The number of new apprenticeship contracts increased from 8,693 in 1960 to 10,520 in 1974, while the total annual number of contracts remained fairly constant—19,702 in 1960 and 19,253 in 1975. In Brussels and in the Walloon region, there are 15 training centers (*centres de formation*) equipped for both general and technical courses. For the general courses, teachers in the formal school system are recruited for additional work on a part-time basis.

Paradoxically the principles involved in this kind of training correspond to the most advanced reforms now being proposed in several countries for the age group from 15 or 16 to 18 or 19, which include the following:

- A systematically organized alternation between work and studies, with practical and related contents;
- Payment to be received for the work;
- The studies to be closely linked to the work and also aimed at general personal development;
- The status of the young person to be based on a contractual

procedure that contemplates the completion of a learning project;
- The training to be under actual conditions of production ("to go to the knowledge and skills resources").

The success and value of this approach depend on relevance at each level, democratization of individual rights, and reliable guarantees and controls to ensure observance of the appropriate statuses. At present, a new law on apprenticeship is being prepared to meet the various criticisms and to improve the educational and social quality of this teaching network.

Institut supérieur de culture ouvière–ISCO. The Higher Institute for Workers Culture was founded in 1962 by the Christian Workers Organization of Belgium, which is a political movement linked with the Christian trade unions. This innovative institution is devoted to offering genuine higher education in important historical, political, social, and economic fields for people with valuable personal experience. To achieve its purpose, there were to be no prerequisites in terms of formal studies, and the style of the studies is distinctive:

- The structure is based on self-managed groups of 30 to 40 students, but the real work is carried out by small units of four to seven people and is based on friendship and exchange.
- There is neither competition nor individual selection. Self-evaluation within the group, through the group, and by the group itself is continuously associated with the process of studies and guides its progress step by step.
- The pedagogical relationship takes the form of equal cooperation between the students and teachers (who are of university level), who try to use personal experiences in order to master new knowledge and methods.
- Besides the acquisition of knowledge, the goals are to qualify people to express themselves well in speech and writing, to work together as a team, to handle conflict situations, and to solve the practical problem of relations of ends and means.
- The acquired knowledge is action oriented.

Four years of study are necessary to get a special certificate–30 Saturdays and 60 evenings each year, together with the defense of a final report on a relevant topic. Usually, the participants must pay a small fee. Their studies are covered by the law on *crédits d'heures* discussed earlier.

These studies are highly valued for advancement in social and political organizations or as a way to self-accomplishment. In addition, the certificate allows one to enter the new "Open Faculty" created in 1972, which has a program of very flexible studies leading to regular degrees under the academic certification of the well-known faculties of the Belgian Catholic higher education network. This aspect of the program, which is very promising, is too young to be evaluated qualitatively or quantitatively.

The ISCO experience is old enough to be recognized as a solid institution with its own identity. "Space-free," it operates through 20 centers in the French-speaking region of Belgium. The program is outlined in Table 20, but there are large options concerning actual content within the constraints posed by the need to study specific approaches, methods, and basic terms of reference.

In 1972, when ISCO was 10 years old, a survey was made of its student population, which revealed the following interesting characteristics:

- Total number: 800 (a third being women)
- Age groups:

20 to 25 years old	23 percent (the minimum age for admission is 20)
26 to 30	23 percent
31 to 40	28 percent
more than 40	26 percent.

- Occupational activities, main categories:

high level	5.7 percent
teachers and social workers	7.3 percent
qualified office employees and middle-level staff	27.0 percent
skilled workers and foremen	16.4 percent
low-level office employees	25.1 percent
unskilled workers	9.4 percent

Table 20. Educational program of the Higher Institute for Workers Culture

	1st year		*2nd year*		*3rd year*		*4th year*	
		hours		*hours*		*hours*		*hours*
Disciplines and courses	Economics	50	Economics	50	Economics	50	Seminars in economics or sociology	40
	Sociology	30	Sociology	30	Sociology (institutions and cultural practices)	20	Art (institutions and cultural practices)	30
	Social history	30	Social history	30	Philosophy, sciences, and technology	20	Philosophy	20
	Practical initiation to mathematics	20	Political initiation	30	Social rights	20	Social rights	10
Methods (individual and collective)	Method and expression	40	Method and expression	30	Method and expression	20	Methods and techniques for observation and analysis of social facts. Practical work preparing for the final report	25
Group life through the enlarged council of year-groups		10		10		10		10
Total Saturday courses (30)		180		180		180		180
Work in subgroups (2 hours/week)		60		60		60		60
Total		240		240		240		240

(Thus a quarter are workers and a quarter are low-level employees.)

- Number of work years before the entrance into ISCO:

one or less	14 percent	these are young adults
2 to 5	20 percent	
6 to 9	15 percent	
10 to 15	21 percent	
more than 15	30 percent	

4

Social Origins and Studies

On the basic problem of equality of opportunity in education, there are few reliable, up-to-date, and comprehensive sets of data in Europe. Until now in Belgium we have had only sporadic data—enough to perceive that there are important inequalities in our educational system, but not very precise and lacking national quantitative perspectives.

Fortunately, very recently a valuable inquiry on this subject has been completed relating to French-speaking youths in Belgium (Belgium, Ministry of National Education and Culture, 1974). In spite of the progressive institutionalization of its regions, Belgium remains a national society. The social structures, involving the same school system, are not very different in the Dutch-speaking and French-speaking regions. The expansion and democratization of the educational system were relatively backward in the northern part of Belgium until the 1950s, but in recent years differences in participation have been rapidly wiped out.

The inquiry was based on a structured sample of more than 37,000 pupils of both sexes in the French-speaking school system, from the primary to the upper-secondary level, in 1973–74. It sought to determine the relationship between social origins on the one hand and (1) success in studies in terms of percentages of laggers in all school years, streams, and sections, and (2) choices of studies at all levels, beginning with the lower-secondary level, on the other hand.

We are primarily interested in youths 15 to 24—and thus in relation to this particular inquiry with youths 15 to 18—who are normally in the upper-secondary level. The reliability of the sample, especially at the upper-secondary level, is indicated in Table 21, which compares the structure of the sample with that of the total French-speaking school population.

Social Origins of Laggers

We begin with a discussion of laggers at the primary level, because the effects at the primary level carry over to the secondary levels. Laggers represent nearly one-fifth of all pupils in the first year of primary school and nearly 40 percent by the sixth year (Table 22). The highest percentages of laggers (25 percent in the first year and 43 percent in the sixth year) are sons and daughters of unskilled workers. The lowest percentages

Table 21. Percentage distribution of pupils in the 1973-74 survey of pupils compared with the total French-speaking school population, by levels and types of instruction

		Sample	*Total Population*
Primary		50.8%	54.2%
Lower secondary		32.2	28.6
Education:	general	13.8	9.6
	technical	6.5	4.6
	vocational	5.2	5.4
	renewed	6.7	9.0
Upper secondary		13.5	13.4
Education:	general	7.2	6.8
	technical	3.8	3.5
	vocational	1.4	1.6
	renewed[a]	1.1	1.5
Higher, nonuniversity type		3.5	3.8
TOTAL		100.0	100.0

[a] See Table 15 and the accompanying discussion on the renewed school programs.

Source: 1973-74 survey of school pupils.

Table 22. Percentage of laggers according to the occupation of the head of the family, primary level

	Average	*High staff*	*Teachers*	*Medium staff*	*Lower staff*	*Agricul-ture*	*Skilled workers*	*Unskilled workers*	*Retailers craftsmen*
1st year	19.4	4.9	5.7	12.2	11.9	12.2	17.4	25.0	18.8
2nd year	25.5	4.4	8.6	8.3	9.2	29.3	26.4	33.8	21.0
3rd year	31.4	2.3	5.9	14.0	18.6	24.5	32.1	40.1	21.5
4th year	34.7	5.4	4.8	17.9	22.8	36.1	35.4	47.2	34.5
5th year	35.7	12.5	4.5	15.4	24.5	28.3	38.8	42.8	31.8
6th year	37.1	10.9	14.3	21.0	25.3	37.2	36.0	43.0	29.9

Source: 1973–74 survey of school pupils.

(less than 5 percent in the first year and less than 11 percent in the sixth year) are children of high staff people (high managerial positions, industry, civil service, and professional activities such as medical doctors). Thus the chances of falling behind in elementary school are five times greater in the first year and four times greater in the sixth year for the children of unskilled workers than for those of the "ruling class," in spite of efforts of primary schools to promote as many pupils as possible. Significant also is the fact that, in the sixth year, the second-best record—in terms of a relatively small percentage of laggers—is obtained by the children of teachers. This indicates that the primary factor is the cultural level and motivation of the families more than their income level. There is, of course, a correlation between both factors, but the primary one is the cultural position.

The sons and daughters of migrants are included in these statistics, but are not shown separately. It is obvious that their low social status and their language and cultural differences are factors tending to cause lags in their primary studies. Does their participation increase the calculated inequalities among native Belgian French-speaking children? Table 23 shows that 19

Table 23. Foreign children as a percentage of school students, by school level, French-speaking and Dutch-speaking sectors, 1972–73

School level	*French-speaking sector*	*Dutch-speaking sector*
Total	17.0%	2.3%
Preprimary	16.5	2.4
Primary	18.9	2.4
General lower secondary	11.7	1.9
General upper secondary	6.8	1.2
Technical lower secondary	17.1	1.8
Technical upper secondary	14.4	1.2
Vocational lower secondary	26.5	3.5
Vocational upper secondary	17.8	1.4

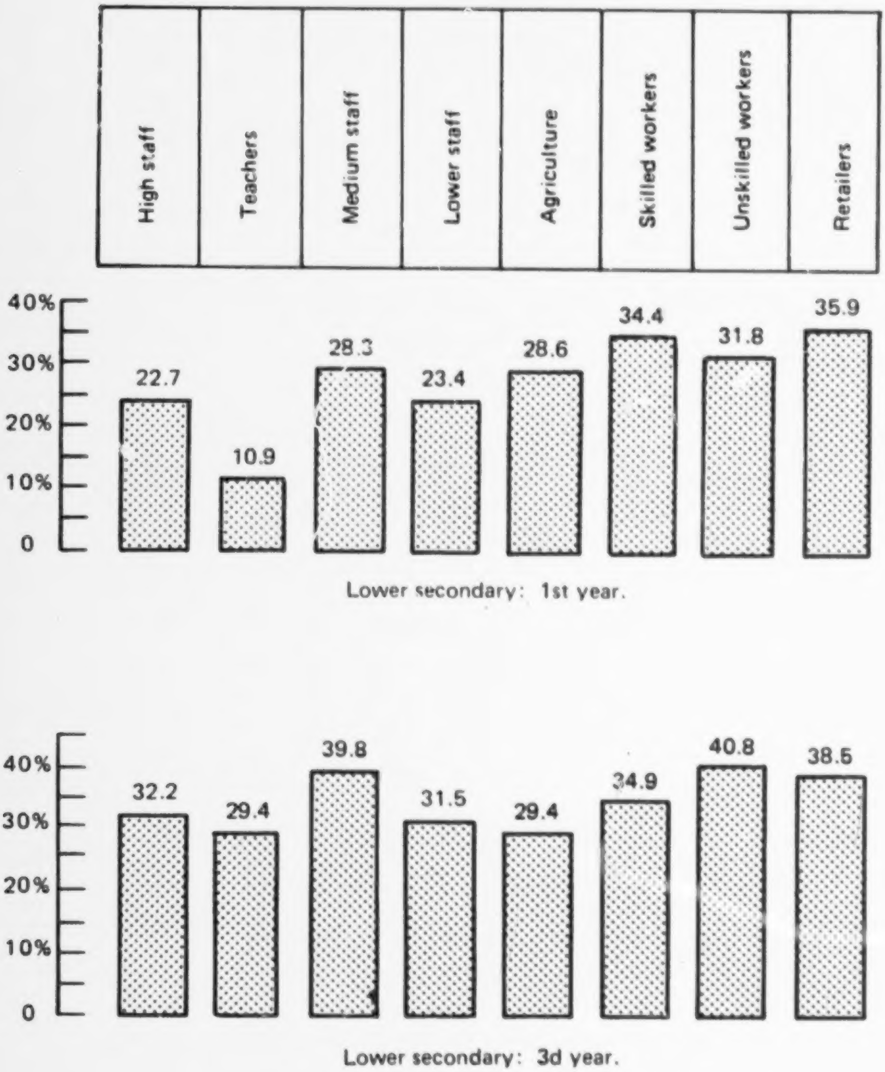
Source: Belgium, Ministry of Education and Culture, French-Speaking Section, *Inquiry of the General Directorate of the Organization of Studies,* Statistical and Programmatic Service, No. 9, 1974.

percent of the pupils in the primary schools are children of foreigners. Assuming that two-thirds of the fathers are unskilled workers and that about 80 percent of the foreign pupils in the primary schools are likely to be laggers, we see that this situation does not change the structure of inequality in the schools. This may be due to the fact that many migrants, after years of work, become skilled workers or workers in the service sector, and some foreigners are members of the staffs of international organizations. However, these foreign children require, of course, special efforts to overcome their handicaps.

At the lower-secondary level--even in the general secondary programs (with which Figure 5 is concerned), where the social origins of parents are more homogeneous and generally at higher occupational levels than in the technical and vocational streams—the impact of social origins is obvious and strong. In the third year, the sons and daughters of agricultural families show a leveling off in their losses (compared with the first year) that puts them in a relatively better position than the children of staff people and equal to that of children from teachers' families. This may reflect that agricultural children drop out between the first and third years, leaving the more able children in school. What seems paradoxical is that the largest increases in percentages of laggers between the first and third years is shown by the teachers' children, who displayed the smallest percentage of laggers in the first year. I am not certain about the reason for this, but the majority of teachers are preprimary and primary teachers and are experts in guiding their children at the elementary level. Teachers used at the secondary level, where disciplines are taught by more specialized people, are not as able to help their children at that level. But the children of teachers improve their relative position at the upper secondary level (Figure 6), because those remaining at that level are more likely to be the sons and daughters of upper secondary and university teachers, all of whom are educated in universities.

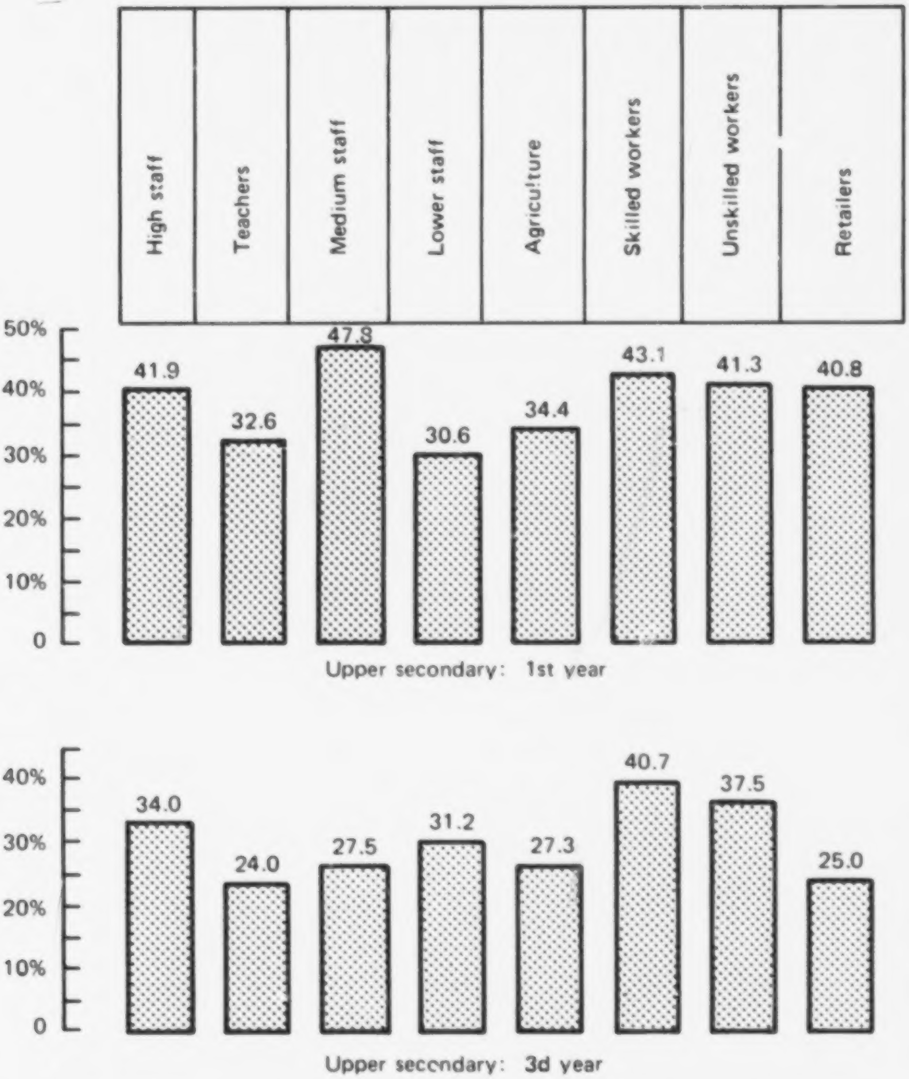
The most important point, however, is that in the third year of the lower secondary level, the laggers in general education remain between 30 and 40 percent.

Figure 5. Percentages of laggers according to the occupation of the head of the family, lower-secondary level, general education program



Source: Belgium, Ministry of Education and Culture, French-Speaking Section, *Inquiry of the General Directorate of the Organization of Studies,* 1974.

Figure 6. Percentages of laggers according to the occupation of the head of the family, upper-secondary level, general education program



Source: Belgium, Ministry of Education and Culture, French-Speaking Section, *Inquiry of the General Directorate of the Organization of Studies,* 1974.

What will they do? The sons and daughters of high and medium staff will be forced to continue, with longer and longer delays, in the upper general secondary level, and this explains the high rate of losses for these groups in the first year of the upper secondary level (Figure 6). The worst laggers will continue in technical and vocational studies. That will be more generally the spontaneous choice of the other social groups, but, at the end of the lower secondary level, a substantial proportion will go to work or into an apprenticeship, with only complementary part-time further studies of a low level. Whether these young people continue in vocational or technical studies or go to work, they must be considered frustrated and deprived of satisfaction in relation to their early socio-economic goals and aspirations.

These suppositions are confirmed if we compare these findings with those relating to the technical and vocational stream. As a result of the selection process that has occurred, the average percentages of laggers for each school year represent the majority (60 percent, 56 percent, and 64 percent in the successive years). Thus, compared with the general education stream, these streams are second-rate studies for generally second-rate pupils according to school standards. The majority of laggers are headed for work, except for the sons of high or medium staff people, who will continue, with increasing lags. The relatively better position of those from agricultural families may be explained by the practical attitudes of these pupils and their tendency to study agronomy and horticulture. The same applies to the comparatively improved position of the retailers group, who enter commercial training, where motivation is high.

At the upper secondary level, the gene[illegible]endency is for the percentages of laggers to decrease from the [illegible]rst to the third year (Figure 6). The explanation is that at this level enrollment is no longer compulsory. Thus, after a last attempt in the first year, failures take the form of dropouts. This is indicated by the retention rates in upper secondary schools, which decrease from 70 percent of the age group at age 16 to 40 percent at age 18.

The smallest decline of laggers occurs among children of skilled and unskilled workers. The explanation here is apparent: obviously the cultural differences between the entire society and the working class make the speech and culture of the upper secondary level difficult for children of workers. At this level, the general education program is the most humanistic, especially reflecting the bourgeois culture.

The percentages of laggers in the general education program continues to be very high at age 18 (24 to 41 percent) despite the declines. This means fewer opportunities to continue into the university and more cruel frustration of individual goals after a longer effort and higher initial aspiration than at the lower secondary level. Thousands of young people are traumatized at this stage of life. As adults they will become disappointed lovers of the university, wanting it for their children but criticizing its privileges, as we have seen.

In the diversified technical and vocational streams of the upper secondary level, the percentages of laggers are even higher, amounting to 54.5 percent, even for the occupation group with the lowest rate, in the first year and to 54 percent in the third year. In general, they increase through the three years, reaching an average of nearly 74 percent in the third year, and amounting to 88.2 percent for children of agricultural families, 81.2 percent for sons and daughters of retailers, 77.3 percent for those from lower staff families, and 70.6 percent for children of skilled workers. Thus, completion of this sector of studies is infrequent; only a few pupils perform their studies at the normal age for their level.

Choices of Studies and Social Origins

A choice of studies is possible for the first time in the seventh school year (after age 12), when one selects the general, technical, or vocational stream. The general stream is later divided into substreams at the upper-secondary level: Latin-Greek, Latin-math, Latin-sciences, scientific A (strong mathematics, but no Latin), scientific B (less emphasis on mathematics), economics, and human sciences. In addition, there is the "special scientific" program in a few schools, discussed in Chapter III.

At the lower secondary level, more than 90 percent of children of high staff people, lawyers, medical doctors, and teachers are in the general stream, while their participation in the vocational stream is negligible (Table 24). (The percentages for children of lawyers and doctors are not statistically reliable, however, because of small samples.) In the technical stream, very small percentages of children from these families are

Table 24. Percentages of pupils in the three educational streams, lower-secondary level, by sex and sociooccupational category of parents

Sociooccupational category	Total			General			Technical			Vocational		
	Male	Female	Total	Male	Female	Total	Male	Female	Total	Male	Female	Total
Total	100.0	100.0	100.0	57.3	61.6	59.3	28.8	20.6	25.0	13.9	17.8	15.7
High staff (public)	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	90.3	95.5	–	9.7	4.5	–	–	–
High staff (private)	100.0	100.0	100.0	96.1	90.2	93.6	3.9	9.0	6.1	–	0.8	0.3
Law	100.0	100.0	100.0	93.8	87.5	91.6	6.2	–	4.2	–	12.5	4.2
Medicine	100.0	100.0	100.0	92.3	96.4	94.4	7.7	3.6	5.6	–	–	–
Teachers	100.0	100.0	100.0	88.6	93.4	91.0	9.8	4.9	7.4	1.6	1.7	1.6
Medium staff	100.0	100.0	100.0	82.0	87.1	84.3	16.5	9.8	13.4	1.5	3.1	2.3
Lower staff	100.0	100.0	100.0	76.5	76.7	76.6	18.9	15.4	17.2	4.6	7.9	6.2
Agriculture and related activities	100.0	100.0	100.0	45.7	57.7	51.2	37.9	20.6	30.0	16.4	21.7	18.8
Skilled workers	100.0	100.0	100.0	54.5	60.6	57.5	32.5	22.2	27.5	13.0	17.2	15.0
Unskilled workers	100.0	100.0	100.0	36.1	50.8	44.1	45.0	26.7	35.0	18.9	22.5	20.9
Retailers/ craftsmen	100.0	100.0	100.0	66.4	66.2	66.3	27.1	22.2	24.6	6.5	11.6	9.1
Arts	100.0	100.0	100.0	60.0[a]	62.5[a]	61.5[a]	20.0[a]	25.0[a]	23.1[a]	20.0[a]	12.5[a]	15.4
No profession	100.0	100.0	100.0	25.7	57.1	45.1	61.5[a]	30.2	42.2	12.8	12.7	12.7
Profession not defined	100.0	100.0	100.0	58.8[a]	57.2[a]	58.1	17.7[a]	21.4[a]	19.3	23.5	21.4[a]	22.6
Profession not registered	100.0	100.0	100.0	52.8	56.1	54.3	29.9	21.8	26.3	17.3	22.1	19.4

[a] Percentages not significant because of small number of cases.

Source: Belgium, Ministry of Education and Culture, French-Speaking Section, *Inquiry of the General Directorate of the Organization of Studies*, 1974.

enrolled—for example, 3.9 percent of the boys and 9 percent of the girls from high staff families. In contrast, among sons and daughters of workers and agricultural parents, participation in the general stream is around 50 percent; in the technical, about 30 percent; and, in the vocational, about 20 percent.

All of these tendencies are very pronounced, and the correlations with social origins are significant. Thus, for the higher socioeconomic categories, only a small minority of children have no real chance to enter the university whereas 40 to 50 percent of the children of workers and peasants lose this opportunity. And they lose it at age 12 or 13, while the effects continue afterwards. The survivors become more able to resist adverse selection by the end of upper secondary studies.

The data for the upper-secondary level reveal the impact of new influences (Table 25). Among children of high staff people in the private sector, for example, 89.5 percent are in the general education stream, but this proportion is lower than that which prevailed at the lower-secondary level (93.6 percent). However, the shift away from general education occurs among boys but not among girls. In fact, female pupils of this age and in this social class seem to be more motivated as they become more and more "liberated" and conscious about sex equality and women's rights. Inheriting the traditional female status, however, they remain psychologically more ready to follow conformist patterns and are less resistant than boys to the school system, which for women means a conquest and a way of entering society on equal terms. In contrast, a significant proportion of boys have shifted to the technical stream, which at the upper-secondary level accounts for 11 percent of those from high staff (private sector) families compared with only 4 percent at the lower-secondary level. Clearly there is a shift from general to technical, explained by school failures. For the girls, however, the shift goes from the technical (which accounted for 9 percent at the lower-secondary level and only 4.3 percent at the upper-secondary level) to the general stream.

Of interest is the evolution in the teachers' category, with a 28 percent loss for the boys (88.6 to 60.3 percent) and only a 13 percent loss for the girls (93.4 to 80.6 percent). The data indicate that the shift takes place to the technical stream.

Table 25. Percentages of pupils in the three educational streams, lower-secondary level, by sex and sociooccupational category of parents

Sociooccupational category	Total			General			Technical			Vocational		
	Male	Female	Total	Male	Female	Total	Male	Female	Total	Male	Female	Total
Total	100.0	100.0	100.0	60.4	59.2	59.9	34.7	23.1	29.6	4.9	17.7	10.5
High staff (public)	100.0	100.0	100.0	85.7	87.0	86.4	14.3	8.7	11.3	–	4.3	2.3
High staff (private)	100.0	100.0	100.0	87.6	92.8	89.5	10.7	4.3	8.4	1.7	2.9	2.1
Law	100.0	100.0	100.0	88.9	91.7	90.5	11.1	8.3	9.5	–	–	–
Medicine	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	94.1	97.1	–	5.9	2.9	–	–	–
Teachers	100.0	100.0	100.0	60.3	80.6	70.0	39.7	12.9	26.9	–	6.5	3.1
Medium staff	100.0	100.0	100.0	76.6	78.9	77.4	20.7	15.8	19.0	2.7	5.3	3.6
Lower staff	100.0	100.0	100.0	74.1	73.2	73.7	24.0	15.6	20.1	1.9	11.2	6.2
Agriculture and related activities	100.0	100.0	100.0	35.3	66.0	48.3	57.4	14.0	39.0	7.3	20.0	12.7
Skilled workers	100.0	100.0	100.0	56.8	63.9	60.1	37.9	17.8	28.6	5.3	18.3	11.3
Unskilled workers	100.0	100.0	100.0	47.9	56.4	51.8	47.4	26.4	37.9	4.7	17.2	10.3
Retailers/craftsmen	100.0	100.0	100.0	66.2	62.9	64.7	29.9	22.7	26.8	3.9	14.4	8.5
Arts	100.0	100.0	100.0	75.0[a]	60.0[a]	66.7[a]	25.0	40.0[a]	33.3[a]	–	–	–
No profession	100.0	100.0	100.0	52.0	48.7	50.0	44.0	35.1	38.7	4.0	16.2	11.3
Profession not defined	100.0	100.0	100.0	50.0[a]	100.0[a]	75.0[a]	50.0[a]	–	25.0[a]	–	–	–
Profession not registered	100.0	100.0	100.0	56.0	49.4	53.2	37.8	28.2	33.6	6.2	22.4	13.2

[a] Percentages not significant because of small number of cases.

Source: Belgium, Ministry of Education and Culture, French-Speaking Section, *Inquiry of the General Directorate of the Organization of Studies*, 1974.

The lower socioeconomic categories (workers and peasants) tend to conserve their relative positions, as expected, because at the upper-secondary level their sons and daughters are more selected and more motivated. (The influence of selection helps them to remain in the general stream, but the decrease of laggers, as we have seen, is smaller than for pupils belonging to higher social strata.) This tendency shows up clearly in the unskilled category: at the lower secondary level, 44 percent of pupils in this group are in the general stream, while the proportion is nearly 52 percent at the upper-secondary level. Among boys, the proportion in the technical stream changes very little, while there is a shift from about 19 percent to 5 percent in the vocational stream. Thus, improvement occurs in all sectors

As for inequality among socioeconomic categories, however, the devastating effect of the laggers influences the structure of participation in the three types of studies at first, but later the relative position of the survivors of the lower socioeconomic groups progressively (though slowly) improves as is evident at the upper-secondary level. But here we have to take into account the proportions of the age groups. The trend seems to be one of strong overall inequality but progressive equality among social categories for survivors in school.

Social origin is not the only factor affecting the choice of studies or success in them (through needs, aspirations, traditions, and so on). We saw, for instance, how sex is a factor, and we also must consider the number of children in the family. The data show that families with three or fewer children achieve better positions in the school system than families with four or more children.

Let us now consider the substreams in the general education stream at the upper-secondary level, for they determine in large part the situation at the university. In analyzing Table 26, we must distinguish between the "noble" sections, which traditionally and actually lead to university studies, and the "less noble" ones, which lead to professional activities at a middle level, such as medium staff, craftsmen, retailers, and small business. There are also high technical studies, lasting one or two

Table 26. Percentages of pupils in the general stream of the upper-secondary level, by type of study and socioccupational category of parents

Sociooccupational category	*Total*	*Total Latin sections*	*Latin/ Greek*	*Latin/ math*	*Latin/ sciences*	*Scien-tific A*	*Scien-tific B*	*Econ-omics*	*Human sciences*
Total	100.0	40.6	15.3	11.9	13.4	12.4	17.6	26.6	2.8
High staff (public)	100.0	54.1	18.9	8.1	27.1	16.2	10.8	13.5	5.4
High staff (private)	100.0	46.7	16.6	11.7	18.4	18.4	18.4	14.1	2.4
Law	100.0	61.1	33.3[a]	16.7	11.1	–	16.7	22.2	–
Medicine	100.0	67.6	40.7	35.3	17.6	11.8	14.7	5.9	–
Teachers	100.0	51.8	16.0	17.3	18.5	13.6	18.5	12.4	3.7
Medium staff	100.0	53.2	18.3	12.7	22.2	15.9	10.3	14.3	6.3
Lower staff	100.0	39.9	16.2	12.7	11.0	9.7	20.2	26.4	3.8
Agriculture and related activities	100.0	34.1	9.1	13.6	11.4	13.6	20.5	29.5	2.3
Skilled workers	100.0	29.1	10.3	8.5	10.3	13.9	14.4	40.8	1.8
Unskilled workers	100.0	25.5	13.5	6.0	6.0	8.3	16.6	48.1	1.5
Retailers/craftsmen	100.0	39.0	15.5	10.3	13.2	11.0	24.3	25.7	–
Arts	100.0	–	40.0[a]	20.0	–	20.0	20.0	–	–
No profession	100.0	40.7	11.1	18.5	11.1	11.1	14.8	29.7	3.7
Profession not defined	100.0	–	33.3[a]	–	–	16.7	–	50.6	–

[a] Percentages not significant because of small number of cases.

Source: Belgium, Ministry of Education and Culture, French-Speaking Section, *Inquiry of the General Directorate of the Organization of Studies*, 1974.

years in general, and nonuniversity higher studies, such as social work, nursing, technical or industrial engineering, industrial design, architecture, mass media and communications, marketing, computer programming, arts, and so on. These latter studies usually lead to high middle-class professional positions or less frequently high professional positions (equal to those resulting from university studies), but the results depend on personal qualities and career qualifications.

If we consider the proportions of students in the Latin sections (the "noble" streams), we note a distinct division between the socioocupational groups. The majority of children of public high staff people, lawyers, physicians, teachers, and medium staff people are in these sections, along with about 47 percent of the children of private high staff people. (This is true in spite of the reluctance of youths to study Latin and the growing loss of prestige of the ancient languages.) But the majority of children in the other sociooccupational groups are in the "less noble" streams.

This dichotomy is characteristic of Belgian society. It does not represent two strictly defined social classes, because the frontiers are fluid. But the structure of participation in the various sectors of the school system reflects, as do other sociological phenomena, the contrasting status of a majority of dependent workers in the active population (employees, industrial workers, small farmers, craftsmen, and retailers) and a minority of the highest, most independent social categories, composed of those in the high government staffs, big business, technology, administration, trade unions, higher education, religion, the military, cultural production and mass media, and the "liberal professions" (medicine, law, art and literature, including prominent journalists).

We saw earlier that through the educational system (and, of course, through political parties and trade unions), the "intelligentsia" is divided between technicians serving the functional life and central values of society, and "critical analyzers," who are against its structures and values. The former are the majority of sons and daughters of the "ruling" minority; the latter are the minority of sons and daughters of the "dependent" majority.

Social Categories

The social categories that constitute the majority of the society are the minority in participation in the "noble" sections of the upper-secondary schools. Structurally speaking, this is absolutely normal in industrial societies (including the Eastern and Western countries, with, of course, differences in degrees). Within this general framework, we shall try to interpret the variations in participation of the different sociooccupational groups.

The highest percentage of participation in the Latin sections is among pupils coming from the medical sociocultural milieu. In spite of the so-called omnivalence law, which I defended before Parliament in March 1964, the majority of the professional class sticks to Latin as a necessary discipline to prepare for the university. The lowest percentage is among pupils coming from families of unskilled workers, while the next lowest is among children of skilled workers.

The percentage of the high staff in the private sector is comparatively low (46.7 percent). Here many fathers who have succeeded in business do not have humanistic traditions but consider themselves "realistic"–"What does Latin mean in our society? What use is it? Let them learn more English!" In many cases, exhausting business practices keep the businessman from participating in cultural activities and values.

The lowest section in prestige among the streams is economics (better described as "commercial"). The highest percentages in this section are among the children of workers–48 percent for unskilled, 41 percent for skilled, 29.5 percent for peasants, and nearly 27 percent for craftsmen/retailers. The lowest percentage here is among the children of physicians–only about 6 percent.

If we consider the most selective of the "noble" sections–the Latin-math section, which prepares for the special examination to enter the faculties of applied sciences (the Belgian *Grandes Écoles* for engineering)–we find that the highest percentage is among children of physicians (35 percent) and the next highest is among children of teachers. The lowest is among children of unskilled workers, the second-lowest those of skilled workers.

All of the differences found in this analysis are quite normal, given the structures of our society. These structures are reproduced generation after generation, and inequality generates inequality. There are, of course, changes resulting from social mobility, for which the school system is a channel. Our data show, however, that social mobility is slowed down by flows that appear to be individual choices but are in fact actions conditioned heavily by social forces in the broader society. The result for youth is an inherited sociocultural heterogeneity, which generates diverse social classes among youth itself. At the same time, youth is also becoming a more and more specific entity in society. Thus the problem for the sociologist in understanding youth is one of dialectical tension between the heterogeneity of youth (in structures, values, way of life, work, and studies) and the homogeneity of youths (in comparison with society as a whole).

Social Background and Higher Education

Although we do not have recent and reliable data about the social origins of university students in relation to their fields of study, we know that selection has played its role throughout all the former years and there are significant differences in opportunities to enter the university. We have also seen that in the university, there are "noble" and "less noble" fields of study with very different outcomes. The choices again seem to be correlated with the basic structure produced at the upper-secondary level. In fact, we have three levels of studies in the university in terms of the value of their outcomes:

1. *Studies awarding specific degrees leading to high staff and high technical positions (engineering, business) and to "liberal" professions (medicine and law).* In these cases the degree is a title to practice a profession (after probationary training periods that are included in the regular program of studies in medicine or performed afterwards in law). In engineering and medicine the length of study is longer than for the other two levels of study. In engineering the period is five years, in general medicine seven years, and in law four years (with an additional probationary year to become a barrister or judge). In all of

these fields, specialized postgraduate studies are desirable and are usually undertaken by the best students or by those not under economic pressure. Advanced studies in economics in fact enjoy the same status as those in medicine, engineering, law, and business.

2. *Studies awarding specific degrees to become a teacher in a given discipline at the secondary level.* These degrees, valuable only academically (in the areas of classical or Germanic languages, history, geography, mathematics, and natural sciences) must be supplemented by a special certificate of pedagogical ability, obtained after undertaking specific courses and probationary terms performed during the course of university studies. Although these programs are officially of university status, their lower prestige and earnings since the beginning of the century have given them a "second-rate" reputation. They are more attractive for women of all social classes because of their attitudes toward professional activities and their appreciation of the relatively free use of time and longer vacations (more suitable for mothers). Men pursuing these studies come chiefly from lower- and middle-class strata.

3. *Studies not awarding specific degrees but having a scientific or cultural value.* This channel of studies includes the social sciences, psychology, political science, pedagogy (not complementary to a degree in sciences, philology, or history), philosophy, economics (without postgraduate training), law (when limited to the general license degree of four years for people not belonging to prestigious legal families and not undertaking legal probationary training),* and commercial university studies. In these fields, the occupational level of the job obtained depends on the honors awarded in the studies, intelligence, character, and social poise of the degree holder, as well as on luck. Until four years ago, men found jobs easily, especially in the large trade and service sector, but many women experienced discrimination and prejudice in job recruitment and

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*Lawyers of this type perform counseling and technical work in private firms and public agencies; they may also become "poor" barristers performing their probationary terms in the offices of "poor" older barristers (the "proletariat" in the Palaces of Justice).

"escaped" into marriage. Now the men also find closed doors.

All of the degrees awarded by universities open up the opportunity to participate in the state competition to become an administration secretary (*secrétaire d'administration*), which is the lowest level in the central administration (followed by *chef de bureau*). The great majority of graduates aiming at this type of career come from the middle class. The status involved is equal to that of a secondary teacher but includes more opportunities to rise to higher positions. People in this category in the public sector are underpaid compared with those in similar positions in the private sector, but they enjoy more security in their jobs.

The first level of university studies represents, as we have seen, about one-half of the student population. These people are prepared to be the technical and management category in our society. More and more of them become medium staff (middle management), where obviously a specific set of values tends to develop. They become a kind of "third estate" (*Tiers État*) in our society; they are conscious of its failures and of some injustices in its structures, but they are in general technocratically minded. Thus we have here the ruling intelligentsia and the "servant" intelligentsia, also, but in a setting leading to an autonomous consciousness of role. In fact, they represent a new social category or class in our postindustrial society, the *cadres* in French.

Students in levels 2 and 3 together—because of their common social origins and their "less noble" streams of studies at the secondary and university levels—represent an intelligentsia more critical of society, with a very strong impact on youths in the school system and on society through their teaching activities and managing of mass media.

5

Integration and Politicization of Belgian Youth

Early in 1969, the Belgian section of the International Association of the Friends of Robert Schuman decided to conduct a large study in the upper secondary schools on the attitudes, values, and activities of these 16- to 18-year-olds toward Europe (as exemplified by the European Economic Community–the Common Market). The first results were published under the title, *Enquête Europe jeunesse 1969.* Mrs. Nicole Loeb-Mayer of the Institute of Sociology at Brussels University had the scientific responsibility for this inquiry, with the help and advice of a committee set up by the EEC and with assistance from IBM-Belgium in the computer work. She sought to check the possible correlations between the social integration and politicization of this sample of students (taking into account sex, social origins, and so forth) and all aspects of their appraisal and involvement in Europe.

We shall present some of the Belgian data here to indicate how significant categories of youth react positively or negatively to Belgian society, its values, the family, the school system, and so forth.

In 1969, a questionnaire was sent to 1,563 secondary schools, to be answered by the pupils in the last two years of the general upper secondary level, in the last three years of the primary and preprimary normal schools, and in the last two years of the technical upper-secondary level. By May 1, 1969, responses came from 1,010 schools and 18,872 pupils. The sample was satisfactorily representative as to sex, age, and spoken languages. There are, however, certain limitations. The results relate to 1969, so that the impact of the economic recession is not involved. We still must question how unemployment and modest restrictions on consumption may have changed the attitudes of youth. The fact that the study was conducted in 1969 does, however, provide an opportunity to search for possible correlations with the turmoil of 1968 in the universities and high schools. A second limitation is that the study relates only to students aged 16 to 18; but differences among students in various types of schools may suggest differences in attitudes among social categories.

Integration, according to Mrs. Loeb-Mayer, means "processes by which the individual acquires and adopts the dominant values and norms of his social environment (especially the total system)." *Politicization* means "the consciousness of belonging to a political society (at the local, regional, national, or world level) and the will to participate in it."

Questions relating to integration involved three aspects: family relations, trust in technical progress, and evaluation of the school system. There were 12 items in all relating to these attitudes (Tables 27, 28, and 29).

As Table 27 shows, less than 9 percent were dissatisfied with the understanding attitude and permissiveness of their parents. In general, the scores were very positive, with 84 percent of the students being "satisfied enough" or "very satisfied." These results are very similar to those of the recent survey of Yankelovich (1974) on American youths.

On trust in technical progress (Table 28), the responses were also quite positive, with 57 percent indicating that they were "trusting" or "highly trusting." But one-tenth of the

Table 27. Family relations—Belgian School Inquiry, 1969

Items		*Scores (percentages)*[a]				
		1	*2*	*3*	*4*	*5*
1.56	My parents are able to understand my worries	11	20	7	36	26
	I agree that I am free enough to decide					
1.62	About the use of my leisure time	9	12	1	30	48
1.63	About the management of my work	5	9	3	29	54
1.64	About my companions	8	13	2	32	45
1.65	About the way to spend my money	8	15	3	35	39
1.66	About my professional future	3	6	2	25	64
1.67	About my political choices	3	5	22	19	51

	Distribution of scores	
	N	%
Unsatisfied	1,599	8.5
Neutral	1,444	7.7
Satisfied enough	11,971	63.4
Very satisfied	3,858	20.5

[a] Scores range from 1 (the lowest level of satisfaction) to 5 (the highest).

answers were "distrustful" and about one-third "neutral." Let us not forget that progress has been the central value of Western industrial societies since the end of the eighteenth century. In fact, since 1968 my intuitive distribution of Western European youth has been: counterculture, around 10 percent; indifference or hesitation, more than 30 percent; and acceptance (at least of the functioning of society), more than 50 percent.

In contrast, the evaluation of the school system (Table 29) tended to be very negative. The indicators reflect doubts about the validity of the school examinations and the relevance of school's preparation for real life, with one-fourth of the young people very critical and 45 percent critical. Only 16.5 percent were satisfied, while 15 percent were neutral. This was the consistent pattern of responses from more than 1,000 schools and more than 18,000 pupils! This appears to be one of the crises of Belgian society; the other is the status of youth at work.

Table 28. Trust in technical progress—Belgian School Inquiry, 1969

		Scores (percentages)[a]				
Items		*1*	*2*	*3*	*4*	*5*
1.15	Owing to technical progress, our society is better organized than that of our grandparents	5	8	5	30	51
1.31	I am happy to live in the age of the computer	6	10	34	27	21
1.40	Technical progress will help to solve the problems of humanity	16	23	3	36	16

	Distribution of scores	
	N	*%*
Distrustful	1,948	10.3
Neutral	6,168	32.7
Trusting	8,449	44.8
Highly trusting	2,307	12.2

[a]Scores range from 1 (the lowest level of satisfaction) to 5 (the highest).

Table 29. Evaluation of the school system—Belgian School Inquiry, 1969

		Scores (percentages)[a]				
Items		*1*	*2*	*3*	*4*	*5*
1.29	The results of the school examinations are a good test of the real value of the individuals	50	27	4	14	5
1.58	The school prepares us to live in the actual world	34	27	5	24	10

	Distribution of scores	
	N	*%*
Highly dissatisfied	4,396	23.3
Dissatisfied	8,460	44.8
Neutral	2,909	15.4
Satisfied	3,107	16.5

[a]Scores range from 1 (the lowest level of satisfaction) to 5 (the highest).

Paradoxically, considering the many sociological studies of the generation gap, the family remains the strong point of integration. But the price of family unity is permissiveness, which makes young people more aware of the authoritative orientation at school. It also makes young people more aware of hierarchical authority in the work situation. Of course the students are at school and not at work, but what they know (or think they know) about their future work generates anxiety.

The results also shed light on variations among groups. For instance, in the Catholic schools, there was slightly less satisfaction with family relations (data not shown). Perhaps this is because permissiveness and understanding of youth are, on the average, higher in nonreligious families, where authority is less in favor. On the other hand, the dissatisfaction with the school system was significantly less acute than in the public schools (Table 30). The proportion who were "very dissatisfied" was significantly higher in the official "philosophically-religiously neutral" school network, whereas the proportion of "satisfied" was higher in the Catholic network. Moreover, combining the "dissatisfied" and the "very dissatisfied," it is clear that the proportion of critical students was significantly higher in the official network and in *both* networks of the French-speaking section. The French-speaking official schools were geographically and linguistically more exposed to the revolt of the *lycées* (upper-secondary schools) in France in the late 1960s. Nevertheless, there was a more marked difference between the two networks than between the two languages (although attitudes were slightly more positive for the Dutch-speaking pupils in spite of the higher percentage of those who were "very dissatisfied").

The negative evaluation of the schools is moderated by the fact that the dissatisfaction was strongest in the highest social classes and weakest in the lowest ones. For the lowest social categories, school is an avenue of upward mobility (Table 31).

Satisfaction with family relations is not related to the types of studies pursued (data not shown). But young people in the technical sector are more confident about technical progress

Table 30. Evaluation of the school system in public and Catholic schools, French-speaking and Dutch-speaking sectors—Belgian School Inquiry, 1969

	Public		*Catholic*	
	French *N = 4,050*	*Dutch* *N = 2,967*	*French* *N = 3,775*	*Dutch* *N = 8,080*
Very dissatisfied	27	30	19	21
Dissatisfied	49	42	49	42
Neutral	13	14	17	16
Satisfied	11	14	15	21
Total	100	100	100	100

(Table 32) and are also more satisfied with the school system (Table 33).

These findings are more representative than might be thought, considering the fraction of young people remaining at school at the upper-secondary level. Underlying them is not just a segment of youth but a sample of the typical categories of Belgian life: the families throughout the country, the sexes, the varied sociooccupational groups, the Catholic and nonreligious circles, and the Dutch and French parts of the land, languages, and cultures.

The Yankelovich study (1974) showed that the attitudes of youth enrolled in the schools became more moderate and quieter in the 1970s than they had been in the 1960s, but that many attitudes typical of the 1960s had later spread to all sectors of American youth. This trend is sociologically understandable, and there are no basic reasons to think that the same phenomenon is not working to some extent in the Western European industrial societies.

To measure the degree of politicization, there were three items on the questionnaire, relating to (1) the usefulness of being interested in politics, (2) whether or not the young person was interested, and (3) the desire to vote at age 18.

The majority answered very firmly that, in their opinion, it was *not* useless to be interested in politics and that politics

Table 31. Evaluation of the school system, by father's occupation–Belgian School Inquiry, 1969

	Occupation of the father					
	Agriculture	*Unskilled worker*	*Skilled worker*	*Retailer or craftsman*	*Employee*	*Managing staff*
	N = *1,184*	*N* = *2,431*	*N* = *2,828*	*N* = *2,756*	*N* = *6,109*	*N* = *3,533*
Very dissatisfied	15%	19%	21%	22%	25%	28%
Satisfied	44	42	44	46	45	47
Neutral	17	18	16	16	15	14
Satisfied	24	21	19	16	15	11
Total	100	100	100	100	100	100

Table 32. Trust in technical progress, by type of studies—Belgian School Inquiry, 1969

	Type of studies		
	"General" *N = 8,915*	*"Normal"* *N = 2,661*	*"Technical"* *N = 7,296*
Distrustful	12	10	8
Neutral	35	36	29
Trusting	42	45	48
Very trusting	11	9	15
Total	100	100	100

Table 33. Evaluation of the school system, by type of studies—Belgian School Inquiry, 1969

	Type of studies		
	"General" *N = 8,915*	*"Normal"* *N = 2,661*	*"Technical"* *N = 7,296*
Very dissatisfied	26	22	20
Dissatisfied	48	47	40
Neutral	14	17	17
Satisfied	12	14	23
Total	100	100	100

should not be left to the politicians (Table 34). There was also another fourth who were comparatively positive in their responses. Thus, about 76 percent in all were favorably disposed toward politics. But opinion apparently differs from behavior. Only 59 percent expressed personal interest in politics, while 27 percent were not particularly interested and 14 percent were very negative. Thus these responses were consistent with those on attitudes toward politics, but remarkably weaker. However, the majority of young people wished to become voters at age 18—38 percent strongly and 16 percent somewhat less so.

In relation to political parties (Table 35), attitudes were not particularly favorable. About one-half of the young people

Table 34. Attitudes toward politics—Belgian School Inquiry, 1969

Items		Scores (percentages)[a]				
		1	2	3	4	5
1.13	It is useless to be interested in politics, it is the business of the politicians	51	25	9	8	6
1.37	I am interested in politics	14	13	14	38	21
1.69	At 18 I would like to be allowed to vote	14	9	23	16	38

	Distribution of scores	
	N	%
Not politicized	2,647	14.0
Neutral	5,009	26.5
Rather politicized	6,518	34.5
Very politicized	4,698	24.9
Total	18,872	100.0%

[a] Scores range from 1 (the lowest level of satisfaction) to 5 (the highest).

agreed that political parties are not able to defend "our real interests," and 22 percent were strongly opposed. But 24 percent refused to express opposition, and 7 percent disagreed with the statement. Also significant, only 30 percent considered the system of parliamentary democracy satisfactory, while 41 percent responded negatively and 28 percent were neutral. On the performance of those responsible for the economy, the responses were slightly more favorable, but only 38 percent were positive, and 37 percent were negative. As many as 13 percent were very critical, while only 9 percent were very satisfied.

These responses confirm an impression of the high politicization of these students—they are interested, but the majority negatively so. Here is a potential danger for parliamentary democracy and a pluralistic system. The answers in 1969, before the severe economic recession, about the role of those responsible for the economy, were very characteristic. This again suggests the impact of the 1968 student upheavals: anarcho-revolutionary activism is transformed into an "interest"

Table 35. Attitudes toward political parties, political institutions, and political leadership—Belgian School Inquiry, 1969

Items		*Scores (percentages)*[a]				
		1	*2*	*3*	*4*	*5*
1.23	Our political parties are not able to defend our real interests	7	17	27	27	22
1.47	Our parliamentary democratical system seems to me satisfactory	17	24	28	24	6[b]
1.61	The responsible people of the national economy properly assure the prosperity of the country	13	24	24	29	9[b]

	Distribution of scores	
	N	%
Very critical	1,588	8.4
Critical	5,053	26.8
Neutral	8,656	45.9
Satisfied	3,575	18.9
Total	18,872	100.0%

[a] Scores range from 1 (the lowest level of satisfaction) to 5 (the highest).

[b] The percentages add only to 99 percent, because 1 percent did not answer the question.

expressed in terms of negative opinions about normal political life.

Another set of questions on political attitudes produced indicators about the feeling of pride in being Belgian—based on real facts and performances. The responses showed clearly that Belgian young people choose to be involved in national life as such. Very characteristic is the answer about the desire to be a citizen of a big country (Table 36). Nearly one-half (47 percent) preferred small Belgium, while only 17 percent (still nearly one in five) regretted being citizens of a small country. Cumulated scores on functional partriotism show that only 36 percent were "neutrals," while 49 percent were classified as patriotic.

Table 36. Attitudes toward involvement in national life—Belgian School Inquiry, 1969

Items		*Scores (percentages)*[a] 1	2	3	4	5
1.16	I am proud when our political leaders play an important role at the international level	7	5	27	29	31[b]
1.26	I would like to be the citizen of a big country	24	23	46	9	8
1.36	When I hear about big space program advances, I think that I should be proud if my country had participated	9	7	17	26	41

	Distribution of scores *N*	%
Nonpatriotic	2,763	15
Neutral	6,829	36
Rather patriotic	8,014	42
Very patriotic	1,266	7
Total	18,872	100%

[a] Scores range from 1 (the lowest level of satisfaction) to 5 (the highest).

[b] The percentages add only to 99 percent, because 1 percent did not answer the question.

To sum up, young Belgian students aged 16 to 18 are predominantly very politicized, but also very critical of parliamentary democracy—especially of political parties. Nevertheless, about one-half remain functionally tied to their small country, while only 15 percent are not patriotic. The potential danger spot consists of the large percentage of neutrals (36 percent) and the very small percentage of strongly attached (7 percent).

In fact, high politicization and a good sense of belonging through functional patriotism (just after 1968) may be encouraging starting points for further constructive developments. But the educated young society might, even so, be on "the razor's edge" tomorrow.

Thus far, we have been emphasizing national attitudes of young people. We shall now look more closely at variations by school network and other factors.

No striking differences appear between the Catholic and public schools or between the French-speaking and Dutch-speaking schools. This is evidence of the homogeneity of life in Belgium. But it is worth observing that the Dutch-speaking pupils of the Catholic school network are the most politicized and that, in general, in each network, the Dutch-speaking pupils are more politicized than the French-speaking pupils. Additional evidence on these points is provided by responses of exposure to the mass media (Table 37).

Girls, however, are significantly less politicized, and their desire to vote at age 18 is weaker, with 43 percent of the boys and only 32 percent of the girls strongly expressing this desire. Sex differences also seem to be related to the degree of exposure to the mass media (Table 38). Behind this is the traditional role of women at home: girls have to help their mothers with housework, whereas boys have more free time.

Interestingly, differences in age among these 16- to 18-year-olds have no influence on the degree of politicization, and, unexpectedly, social origins also do not account for significant differences in politicization or in the proportions of pupils exposed to the mass media. Types of studies are related to degree of politicization, in that those in technical programs are less

Table 37. Exposure to the mass media in public and Catholic schools, French-speaking and Dutch-speaking sectors—Belgian School Inquiry, 1969

	Public		*Catholic*	
	French	*Dutch*	*French*	*Dutch*
	N = 4,050	*N = 2,967*	*N = 3,775*	*N = 8,080*
Percent regularly following the radio or TV news programs	63	77	64	77
Percent frequently reading newspapers	60	69	57	68

Table 38. Exposure to the mass media, by sex—Belgian School Inquiry, 1969

Information	*Boys*	*Girls*
Percent regularly following the radio or TV news programs	76	66
Percent frequently reading newspapers	73	55

politicized than pupils in other programs. This may be because there are fewer opportunities offered in technical studies to discuss political questions and because the teachers are less oriented to these concerns.

To sum up, students 16 to 18 are well integrated in a permissive family setting that allows boys and girls considerable freedom in decisions about leisure, management of work, companions, use of money, occupational choices, and political orientation. They tend to be trustful of technical progress, the most significant value of industrial societies. They are highly politicized and wish to become voters at age 18. (These findings, of course, describe majority attitudes.)

Belgian 16- to 18-year-olds, however, are not well integrated in school. They do not believe school selects pupils fairly and prepares them properly for adult life and work. They have negative attitudes toward politicians, political parties, and parliamentary democracy. Thus two key institutions of society, the educational system and the political system, are largely not accepted by these young people. Girls and children of workers are less opposed to school, whereas children of the highest social strata are especially opposed to school and to technical progress.

This sketch of the age group still at school reflects, in our opinion, the culture of Belgian youth as a whole and the general image of its integration in society.

Military Service and Youth

Although the proportion of young men drafted was very high before World War II, the numbers drafted and their proportion of the age group has steadily declined since the 1950s. In the age group from 19 to 23, from which most of those drafted are drawn, there were about 33,000 soldiers in 1961 and 29,000 in 1970. Comparing these numbers with the total male population of these ages (Table 1), we find that those in the armed forces represented 15.7 percent in 1961 and 10 percent in 1970.

The explanation of the small proportion of men in the armed forces is the highly technical character of the NATO armies, requiring physical, intellectual, and technical aptitudes. There are also exceptionally generous exemptions, and more and more specialized mercenaries are being recruited for a few years of service. The legal period of military service is only 10 months, and has been growing shorter and shorter. A reduction to six months is promised for 1980.

In general, with the exception of career interests in special services—such as the air force, the navy, commandos, and paratroops—Belgian young people are not very fond of military service. Nevertheless, some choose to go in order to be trained for a particular trade.

Delinquency and Youth

Data on delinquency of young people are available only for those who are considered legally minors, that is, those under age 21, since the age of majority is 21. Judicial sentences on older people are not classified by age. Fortunately the number of minors convicted is very small (Table 39). It is also encouraging that the percentages convicted are smallest for those 18 to 20. Among girls, as might be expected, the percentages are lower—less than half those of the boys. However, the data indicating changes in the early 1970s (Table 40) are less encouraging. Although they show a decline in the number of convictions of boys 15 to 17 in all of the regions, and among girls 15 to 17 in Brussels and boys 18 to 21 in the Walloon region, they show sizable increases for other groups. The worst aspect is the growing delinquency among girls 18 to 21 in all three regions; in the Dutch-speaking region female delinquency is growing at all ages. However, the phenomenon still has a very weak impact in daily life, taking into account very small absolute numbers.

Table 39. Number and percentages of young people convicted of crimes, by age and sex, 1973

	Numbers			*Percentage of the age group*		
Ages	*Boys*	*Girls*	*Total*	*Boys*	*Girls*	*Total*
15	389	224	613	0.49	0.29	0.39
16	478	249	727	0.61	0.33	0.47
17	578	208	786	0.75	0.28	0.52
18–20	483	223	706	0.21	0.10	0.16
Total	1,928	904	2,832			

Source: Belgium, Ministry of Justice.

Table 40. Indices of young people convicted of crimes in 1974 (on 1970 or earlier base), by age, sex, and region

	Indices for 1974			
	15–17		*18–21*	
Regions and base year	*Boys*	*Girls*	*Boys*	*Girls*
Brussels (1970 = 100)	72.0	84.8	151.4	153.2
Walloon region (1969 = 100)	87.9	107.3	63.7	151.3
Dutch region (1968 = 100)	83.2	129.7	154.0	179.1

Source: Belgium, Ministry of Justice.

There are, of course, gangs of troublemakers, especially in the big cities, who are arrested and sent before the courts. In addition, very small but active groups of left-wing young people despise the physical integrity and private property of neighbors. But none of these urban phenomena are numerous.

On the use of drugs there are no reliable data, especially relating to youths. Drugs are a matter of concern for police, parents, and educators, but more because of the serious consequences than because of a real threat. There are no signs of an actual danger for Belgian youth in the 15 to 24 age group. A professor of the faculty of medicine of Brussels University conducted a survey two years ago which indicated that cases of drug abuse were very scarce, especially the use of hard drugs.

Suicide is exceptional among young people. When it occurs, it is often during adolescence. There are no reliable data on suicide in Belgium, because it is not a crime under the Belgian legal system. Moreover, in Catholic families there is a tendency, for religious reasons, to present a suicide as an accident, if possible.

6

Implications—Past and Future

Toward a Sociology of Youth

There are libraries full of books in all languages dealing with theories of youth as an integrated social group, with specific characteristics and problems. This is the literature on the "generation gap" or the "new social class." Youth, of course, is a reality, but when we analyzed the phenomenon on the basis of various categories, we gained the impression that there are problems among groups of youths, rather than the problem of youth as a whole.

There is a misleading quality in the ideological research on youth as a group with consistent actions that are taken for granted. But, of course, youth in our consumer society should be considered a special potential market on the basis of biologically common traits and of an economically dependent mode of consumption. They are dependent because of being enrolled in school, lacking income, or because of low-paid and precarious first jobs. In fact, an important fraction of youths—at least, the great majority of the 15 to 18 age group—live in their parents' homes. They are potential consumers through pocket money when at school or through small earnings when they are at work. Thus the subculture of youth, based on a type of consumption, was created and strengthened by the economy and by the incentives normally present in our economic system.

This is not a problem as such; but, beyond the biological traits and the dependent economic status, this subculture makes youth more visible and specific. It pushes youth to become conscious of its identity.

It seems, on the basis of this study, that the main problems concerning youth are categorical and that the general youth problem is only an indicator of a total social crisis. To a large extent, the "youth problem" is created by the adult culture itself. Our doubts, anxieties, and uncertainties about values and how to apply them correctly are reflected in the acculturation of our children.

Beyond these general conditions, however, there are obviously crucial problems. There is a universally perceived *school problem* and a *work problem* associated with the paths leading from economic dependence on the parents to regular and stable work. There is also a *leisure problem* associated with the poor adaptation and low-level substitutes offered by urban society to the "play needs" of young people. And there is a *sexual problem* involved in the way people enter into normal, satisfactory, and accepted relationships.

The sexual and leisure problems are more general than the others, but they are also indicators of larger social problems, involving adults in relation to sex and the status of women and in relation to the uses and consequences of instruments of culture. Here youth appears more as a group involved in major social problems than as a group concerned with a specific age-linked problem.

The same cross-sectional dialectics might be applied to work and to the structure of division of labor. Job satisfaction, appropriateness of skills for their uses, and obsolescence of technical knowledge are not problems only of youth. They are general problems with special aspects for particular groups, such as newcomers to work. Which is the more consistent framework: a youth problem—of which work, studies, leisure, and sex are aspects—or a work problem—in which youth is one of the categories involved?

School, of course, is by definition a problem specific to youth, but it is only specific if it is considered in terms of actual existing structures, because education and training are becoming lifelong problems. It is said more and more frequently that the only possible way to approach the problem of education is to consider it as a totality from the preprimary until the "third age" educational stage. In this context, youth is a factor interacting with other sectors and aspects of an entire problem.

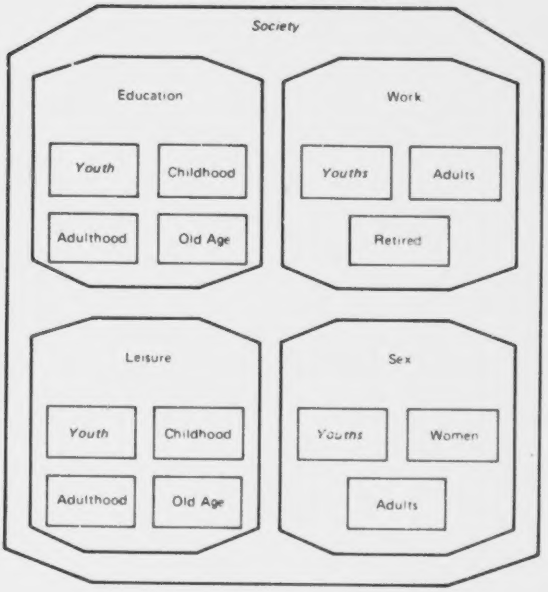
In abandoning the temptation to build up a comprehensive theory on the youth problem, we shall try, on the basis of our findings, to review and to define the problems of young people. After this attempt, we shall see whether there is a need for some type of general theory.

The sociologist might use three models to deal with the youth problem, conceiving these models through three graphic presentations as in Figure 7. Because this study is concerned with youth Model II, the age groups approach, seems appropriate. But with this model we lose the comprehensive and integrating aspects of the general problems of school, work, sex, and leisure. The weakness of Model I, in turn, is that the general study of the four problems–education, work, leisure, and sex–applied to youth necessarily involves the three other age groups not included in this study. Finally, Model III is the translation of an *a priori* thesis on the youth problem, which might or might not arise from an inductive, analytical, and concrete study. If this general explanation of the youth problem were to emerge from our findings–at the end and not at the beginning–Model III would offer a good framework for a systematic theory.

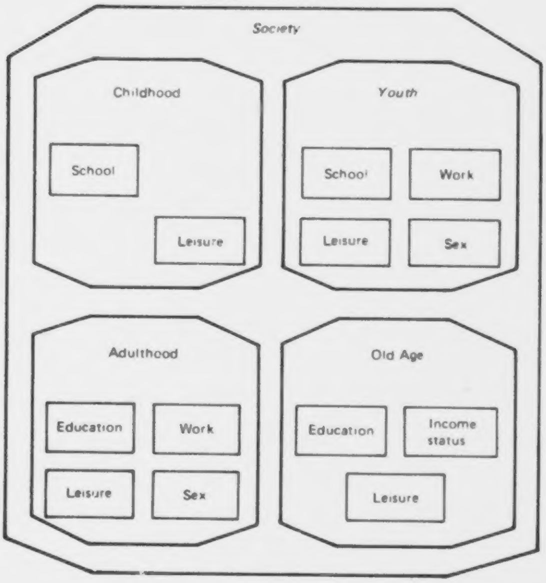
At this stage, except for the biological characteristics and the dependent economic status, there is no reliable basis on which to build up one consistent image of youths. We must keep in mind as a new trait, however, the fact that physiological maturity (after the crisis of puberty) occurs two years earlier than in the past. Also important is the exposure of children and youth to mass media information; family and school are no longer the only sources of knowledge. These biological and technical perspectives are common to all industrialized societies. Thus we must keep in mind three perspectives: youth as a biological entity, youth as an economic status, and the fact that young people are raised with television.

Figure 7. Three models of a sociology of youth

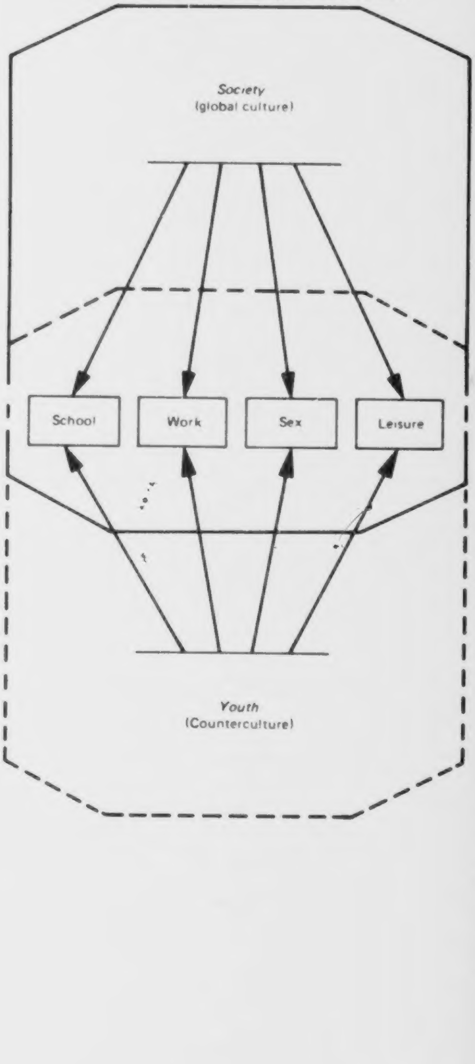
a. The *societal problems,* approach


Society
Education
Youth
Childhood
Adulthood
Old Age
Work
Youths
Adults
Retired
Leisure
Youth
Childhood
Adulthood
Old Age
Sex
Youths
Women
Adults

b. The *age groups* approach


Society
Childhood
School
Leisure
Youth
School
Work
Leisure
Sex
Adulthood
Education
Work
Leisure
Sex
Old Age
Education
Income status
Leisure

c. The *generation gap* approach


Society
(global culture)
School
Work
Sex
Leisure
Youth
(Counterculture)

Synthesis of Findings

1. The rise in the proportion of young people to 15 percent of the total population has meant that the problems of youth have achieved a perceptible and sensitive impact on the entire society and on national policy and public opinion. This quantitative importance of youth gives rise to possible myths, stereotypes, and prejudices.

2. Earlier marriages with very small differences in ages tend to create two new images of the family: The first is a companionship of equals, both working, postponing the birth of the first child, and both accepting new domestic roles more or less consistent with the modern image of the woman. These people are consumers of mass culture, who try to improve their economic and social status. The second image is based on the traditional roles (changed by the equality of ages), with the first child born earlier, and centered on private life. Time is spent with close friends of the same generation in a community spirit and on leisure in a natural environment. Work is only a means to ensure a satisfactory life, with relatively modest needs and without career goals. These new images do not, of course, totally suppress the traditional type of family and do not always attain a pure state of their own.

3. Unemployment affects this age group severely, especially women. This situation creates a sense of alienation and frustration. The problem is compounded by prejudice against youth in the adult world. Many employers think that young people are less able to work, even though data indicate that this is not true. They argue—and this is particularly frustrating—that young people do not have enough experience. How could they? The adult tendency to reject youth is linked with the "generation gap" myth—action and myth feeding on one another.

4. Young people at the upper secondary level, as we have seen, are critical of the school system, rejecting the evaluation procedures and feeling that school does not properly prepare them for life. This attitude prevails among a majority of both sexes, but less so for the girls than for boys. A related phenomenon is the amazingly high proportion of laggers at all levels and

in all sectors of studies. These pupils in many cases glide from the "noble" general stream to the "less noble" technical and vocational streams and are frustrated. They suffer a poor start in their vocational lives and feel like second-rate citizens. "Fed up" with school, they will never again be motivated to undertake any courses. Because the selection process—based on negative examinations which only recognize the capacity to continue or not, without positive guidance to other types of studies—is at work throughout the school system, including the university, the Belgian education system produces negatively-minded people who are against society and in many cases become "outsiders" (see Kerr, 1977, p. 142). In this connection we should add their higher education plays, as we have seen, a "parking" function, permitting the postponement of entry into working life when unemployment severely reduces job opportunities for those completing the upper-secondary level of school. But these students are not really motivated to undertake higher studies. They become adversaries of the university, where most of them cannot be happy and successful.

5. The distribution of youth among types of studies—general, technical, technical/vocational, apprenticeship—is closely related to social origins. Consciousness of this fact is now spreading among young people and the general public, and widespread opposition to this inequality is perceptible among pupils and students. They protest especially about the evaluation system. But access into the university also reveals three unequal levels of studies, related to social-class differences, as we have seen. In Belgium, almost half of the students are in level I (striving for professional degrees), while the other half are in the two lower levels. This distribution produces results that perpetuate the link between different levels of studies and social origins of the students. The graduates of level I—the faculties of medicine, engineering, law, and high-level business schools—represent an intelligentsia that is functional and prepared to serve and improve the society as it is. The outcomes of their studies assure high status. They are intelligent, selective consumers of the mass culture. In politics they are conservative and technocratically minded. They trust science and technology

and claim to be realistic and pragmatic. This is, of course, a sociological type, and there are exceptions.

The other half of the university students—roughly in the faculties of sciences, social sciences, psychology, and the humanities—become specialized teachers for the secondary level as well as sociologists, anthropologists, psychologists, political scientists, and so on. They have no specific job outlets except for a small number of teaching positions, which are of lower status in terms of income and prestige. Coming from lower social strata and pursuing courses on social matters (especially analysis of social systems), students of social sciences are trained to criticize social relations and structures. They are oriented against the existing system; interested in politics, they are left-wing and produce small groups of activists.

The future teachers, especially those in the humanities, have courses in common with future social scientists and are exposed to the same type of social criticism. With backgrounds only in the schools and the university, and returning to high schools as teachers, they are ignorant of the functioning of the economy and of the actual productive and organizational work in the private and public sectors. The "servant" intelligentsia may be too realistic, but the secondary teachers are too far from reality. Influenced by the critical attitudes of the social scientists in the university and unhappy about the fact that their status is lower than, for example, that of engineers, many of them communicate their negative analysis of society to their pupils. The pupils welcome this kind of message, and educationally minded teachers are eager to transmit their knowledge about societal problems. They behave, in fact, like cultural militants opposed to the actual society, and along with the social scientists, they create the new culture. They are the "critical" intelligentsia, as opposed to the "servant" intelligentsia.

This goes far to explain the turmoils of the 1960s (especially 1968) and the climate of conflict in the universities. The turmoils were preordained by the patterns of "noble" and "less noble" streams in higher education. Thus we can see how the minds of upper secondary pupils are formed and why they tend to be interested and involved in politics but negatively oriented toward parliamentary democracy. The social dichotomy of Belgian society, therefore, is preordained by the dichotomy of the structures of the postcompulsory school system as a whole and also perpetuates that dichotomy.

To conclude briefly, Belgian youth has the following four points of frustration, alienation, and *anomie*:

1. Unemployment is more severe for young workers than for others.

2. Work is "closed" to them because of negative attitudes of employers. Youths also feel that school did not prepare them adequately for the world of work, especially in the case of the laggers. This is related to the discrepancy between permissive family attitudes and the rigidity of the school system and of work.

3. Youths do not accept the evaluation methods, discipline, and program content of the schools or the inequalities fostered by the tendency for students to be oriented according to their social origins.

4. The cities do not provide satisfactory "playgrounds" for the use of leisure time, which is spent with peer groups. Instead, youths are the prey of the economic system, which manipulates them as a specific market, defining their needs (for clothes, records, radio sets, motor cycles, travel, sport, games, books, clubs, and so on). Thus the pocket money of students and young workers living with their parents is used unconsciously to transform a way of life into a subculture. This subculture in turn provides a framework for the counterculture fomented by the dissatisfaction that we have been analyzing.

Nevertheless, we must not forget some positive aspects:

1. Familial relationships are good in families that tend to be permissive.

2. Many young people learn successfully, and many from the lower strata are able to go through the school system and on to the university. Although we have nearly 150,000 laggers, we also have 100,000 young adults studying on a part-time basis.

3. The concern for politics, though critical and negative, is better than the indifferent attitudes of adults toward young people.

4. The new marriage trends are a promise of a better quality of life in the future–a quality emphasizing respect for human values.

5. The new generation of women displays, with the critical spirit of newcomers in a more open society, eagerness for work and motivation for studies.

There is a minority of youthful trouble makers, but there are also many young people who are generous human beings, ready to work for something useful and new. The difficulty is the large number of young people who are affected by the problems of society.

On the basis of our findings we shall try to sketch dilemmas and proposed solutions.

1. Youth needs *"deschooling,"* but society needs a strong organization of studies, adequate for the needs of a sophisticated technology–including efficiently functioning democratic social relations. Is this a dilemma? Not at all. Deschooling means the following:

- Individualization of training, based on the principle of self-managed learning linked with democratic group activities
- Continuous, positive orientation and guidance through an optimal and flexible credit system, suppressing negative examination procedures, but providing for basic elementary knowledge and for necessary prerequisites
- Alternatives to the classroom system with provision for diversity of age and size of groups
- Less instruction in learning rooms and more through activities carried out where things happen and where knowledge and skills are produced ("go to the resources")
- Use of multimedia communications sources
- Territorial decentralization, allowing for units covering the educational needs of a given population (a total comprehensive "campus" extending through the district, as proposed by Bertrand Schwartz [1974] for units of 50,000 people or by the recent Rhein-Westphalian law for adult education based on units of 40,000)
- Along with decentralization, definition of central power to

compensate for inequalities, define priorities, and provide for equality of levels of study and certification
- Diversification of the teaching functions at each level of studies, but equality of status and training for the full-time, professional, responsible teachers at all levels
- Alternation of work and studies for the 14 to 15 and 18 to 19 age groups, based on a national standards of equitable earnings
- Recurrent education provided on the basis of paid educational leaves, by law or collective bargaining, for all types of studies (professional, vocational, general), for self-improvement or for community life, and at all levels.

These points, of course, are only general guidelines for an educational policy, because the starting points, progressive implementation, priorities for target groups, actions of pressure groups, and choices concerning ways and means depend on the political parties, public opinion, institutional traditions in each country. In any case, deschooling does not mean less organization but rather more democratic control and management.

2. Youth needs to be involved early and progressively in working life, assuming opportunities for more studies actually become recurrent. The changes in education will provide more opportunities to engage in work. The responsibilities of employers need to be defined: employers should pay financial charges and technical support when the changes lead to improvements in their own productivity in the short or medium term, but should be reimbursed when their activities have supported general education and self-improvement. These equitable goals call for cooperative schemes involving all the concerned groups and institutions: the learners and workers themselves, the employers, the representative bodies (such as councils of the entrepreneurial or trade union delegations), decentralized educational authorities, teaching institutions, youth, women, cultural organizations, and others. These cooperative agreements ought to be formally institutionalized. Employers, as the organizers of work, must try to eliminate rigid and repetitious operations and institute less alienating procedures involving the workers in the management of their own jobs.

The problem of working youth, openly or implicitly, calls for an effective degree of industrial democracy. This approach will be judged in the future as a turning point, historically as important as Taylor's new perspective of industrial work in 1880, for the long-run benefit of production and humanity, especially for young people.

3. *Regardless of the stage of the business cycle, unemployment of youth must be totally eliminated.* Youth must be given the opportunity for suitable studies, work, or paid sociocultural services. Useful, rewarding, and gratifying activity cannot be closed to young people. When studies or work activities are not available, there must be a service organization available for them.

Should service be obligatory or should it be voluntary? This question has different meanings in different countries. In my opinion, it is essentially a question of diversity in the types of service activities available (including cooperation in developing countries) and in types of incentives. In Belgium, we are initiating this approach especially through subsidized terms of probation ("stages") for young workers, but there are many unmet needs in communities and among social categories that have not, until now, been satisfactorily provided through commercial or public initiative. It is a difficult problem, but there are a number of comparable experiences in various countries, and it is worthwhile to study this question on an international basis.

4. With respect to leisure, the problem is determining the extent it is possible to foment a "cultural revolution," based on the attitudes and values of our youth. Real culture is not passive consumption (to sit, to see, to watch, to bet, to comment); real culture is participation, which means creativity, spontaneity, and sharing of knowledge and experiences. If self-management is one of the main dimensions of democracy, then we should expect leisure-time culture to be self-managed by people and not consumed on the basis of commercial "choices," criteria, and behavior.

Ministries of culture must take the responsibility for working with representative youth movements to prepare, step by step, for such developments. Some perspectives have been provided by international organizations like the Council of Europe and UNESCO, but each country should be responsible for drawing out what is relevant for its own problems.

The problem of leisure and culture is a general and crucial problem of our industrial societies, with specific aspects varying among age groups. Why not use the framework of the youth subculture as the starting point for social change? Youths represent the future today.

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